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ABSTRACT

The objectives of the Second Caribbean Conference on Early Childhood Education included: (1) setting a framework for the development of early childhood programs in the Caribbean; (2) initiating a Plan of Action to address early childhood issues in the Caribbean in terms of policy, structure, and implementation; and (3) facilitating the networking of early childhood education professionals. Following an introduction outlining the companies aims and objectives, the sections of the report are: (1) "The Value of Early Childhood Education and Development--the Case for Investment"; (2) "Challenges and Opportunities in the Caribbean"; (3) "A Quest for Quality"; (4) "Integrated Approaches"; (5) "Mobilizing Support"; and (6) "The Next Stage." The report's appendices contain a Caribbean Plan of Action, an adopted resolution, a situation analysis, list of conference documents, list of participants, and the agenda. (EV)

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2nd CARIBBEAN CONFERENCE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

1-5 April 1997
Barbados

PS 026264

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2nd CARIBBEAN CONFERENCE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Dover Convention Centre, Barbados

1-5 April 1997

SUMMARY REPORT

Prepared by
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for Organising Committee

Edited and prepared for publication by
Organising Committee and UNICEF CAO

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PREFACE

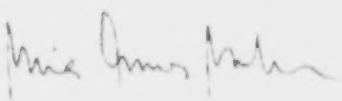
As we move into the 21st century, I firmly believe that the future of the Caribbean has to be positioned within the sphere of knowledge-based and skills-intensive industries. Technology, for the most part, has made size and geography irrelevant. Today, access to the requirements for participating in a knowledge-based and skills-intensive economy is not as capital intensive as participation in mining or other areas of heavy manufacturing. If we are to truly gain prominence, in terms of our capacity to occupy centre stage in the global economy and global society, and if we are to give back some of what we have received, then it is only through our people that this will happen - but only if we are capable of preparing our people today, for the challenges that lie ahead tomorrow.

It is a fact that the situation in respect of post-Lome IV come the year 2000, remains uncertain to the Caribbean. It is also a fact that the prospect of joining a free trade association of the Americas, come 2005, is one that has many implications for early childhood educators today, because it is the generation who will be coming into their own in 2010 and 2015 that will ultimately determine our capacity to have sustainable growth in this region. If we accept that the days of preferential quotas and subsidies are a thing of the past for the Caribbean, then we must also accept that our people must become competitive in any sphere and every sphere, and at the same time, must be equally and readily re-trainable at all stages in their development.

That therefore requires a commitment to ensuring a sound foundation in respect of our children and there is an inextricable link in terms of that vision and what we do today. This is why the theme of the Conference "Tomorrow Begins Today" was very apt to national programmes and visions in this regard. From the very outset, the present Government of Barbados linked its vision for development, to its capacity for improving the quality of education obtained by its people. We also had to ensure that the house was built on solid rock! Consequently, the first two years of this Government's educational reform measures have been geared towards the early childhood and primary levels to ensure that the investment our Government is making at the secondary and tertiary levels, is indeed maximised.

I am pleased to say that the Plan of Action for Early Childhood Care, Education and Development, developed at the Conference, was readily endorsed by the CARICOM Standing Committee of Ministers of Education in May 1997. The sector was identified as an essential "engine of change" for preparing this region for the next millennium and it is in this context, that the sector will be considered by CARICOM Heads of Government at their July 1997 Summit in Jamaica, during a special session on human resources development.

The Plan is flexible enough to allow countries to complete their own information needed for effective planning and for each country to adjust phased activities to their own realities. I encourage all relevant players - policy makers, practitioners, trainers, teachers and parents to play their part in making its local adoption a reality. Remember that a strong foundation is the bedrock of the region's continued sustainable development and that together we can make "Tomorrow Begin Today".



Honourable Mia Amor Mottley, M.P
Minister of Education, Youth Affairs & Culture
Barbados

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The President and Members of the Early Childhood Education Association of Barbados, would like to express sincere thanks, to all those who contributed to the success of the Conference.

We wish to express special thanks to the Honourable Mia Amor Mottley, Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, Barbados and Ministry Officials including Senator Cynthia Forde, Parliamentary Secretary; Ms. Lolita Applewaite, Permanent Secretary, Education; Mr. Carlisle Carter, Permanent Secretary, Culture; Mr. DeCourcey Edey, Deputy Permanent Secretary and Conference Coordinator; Mrs. Wendy Griffith-Watson, Chief Education Officer; Miss Carmelita Archer, Deputy Chief Education Officer; Mrs. Meta Edgehill, Retired Senior Education Officer, Primary; Mr. Glenroy Cumberbatch, Senior Education Officer, Planning; Mrs. Catherine Blackman, Education Officer, Nursery and Infant Education; Mrs. Jean Riviera, Retired Education Officer, Nursery and Infant Education and Dr. Megan Goodridge, Special Projects Officer.

May we take this opportunity to state how grateful we are to the Coordinators of activities and committees in particular:-

Mrs. Gloria Lucas - Programme Committee; Mrs. McCaskie-Wint - Constitution Committee; Mr. Irvin Best - Constitution Committee; Mrs. Idamay Denny - Conference Handbook; Ms. Arlette St. Hill - Schools Projects; Mr. Michael Hoyte - Art and Craft Exhibition; Ms. Beverly Alleyne - Art and Craft Exhibition Mr. Selwyn Belle - Chief Audio Visual Aids Officer (Ag.) and the personnel of the Audio Visual Aids Department; Mrs. Donna Hunte-Cox - Social and Cultural Events; Mrs. Shelley Scantlebury - Conference Services; Ms. Alies Jordan - Conference Room; Mr. Bruce Alleyne - Liaison Services; Mr. Manasseh King - Accommodation; Ms. Pauline Branch - Secretariat; Mr. M. Broomes - Secretariat; Mrs. Heather Edwards - Secretariat; Mr. Desmond Harris - Secretariat; Mrs. Lydia Jemmott - Secretariat; Mr. David Waterman - Secretariat; Mr. Ferris Cummins - Transportation; Ms. Noreen Cox - Recordings; Mrs. Sandra Jordan - Rapporteurs and Ms. Sharon Austin - Public Relations.

The ECEAB would like to register its profound thanks and appreciation to major collaborators and sponsors Mrs. Colleen Winter-Brathwaite, UNESCO Representative; Mr. Macharia Kamau, Area Representative of UNICEF Caribbean Area Office and staff; Messrs. Herman Grant and Desmond Durant of the Caribbean Development Bank, the Canadian High Commission and British High Commission, for organizational, technical and, or financial support for the conference.

Special kudos are also extended to the resource persons, all of whom selflessly contributed of their time and talents for the enrichment of Conference participants.

The Association also appreciates the patience and kind support of the management and staff of the Dover Convention Centre.

We also acknowledge the support of the following contributors:-

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Pizza Man Doc
Pronto Marketing and Printing Brokers
Public Workers Credit Union
Regional Police Training Center
Roxy Supermarket
Royal Barbados Police Force
Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic

Finally, we extend our appreciation to the following schools which engaged participants through a high quality of project work and delightful performances at the Opening Ceremony of the Conference:-

Charles F. Broomes Primary
Christ Church Girls' Primary
Eden Lodge Nursery
Erdiston Nursery
Government Hill Nursery
Ignatius Byer Primary
Gordon Greenidge Primary
Hindsbury Primary
Roland Edwards Primary
St. Albans' Infants
St. Bartholomew's Primary
St. Gabriel's
St. James Primary
St. Patrick's Roman Catholic School
St. Stephen's Nursery
Wesley Hall Infants
Wesley Hall Junior
West Terrace Primary
Wilkie Cumberbatch Primary

INTRODUCTION

The Second Caribbean Conference on Early Childhood Education took place in Barbados from April 1 to 5, 1997. It was organized and hosted by the Early Childhood Education Association of Barbados, with organisational, technical and financial support from the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, the United Nations Educational, Scentific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Financial support also came from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the Canadian High Commission, British High Commission, and the private sector in Barbados.

The Conference was attended by 91 overseas participants from 21 countries, and boasted an average daily attendance of 135 local participants, as well as 45 parents representing Parent Teacher Associations across Barbados. In the main, each official delegation comprised a chief policy-maker, a teacher trainer, a representative of a Non-Governmental Organisation involved in service delivery or national Association and a representative practitioner.

This Conference followed the First Caribbean Conference which was held in St. Thomas, U.S Virgin Islands in October 1994.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Conference had the following objectives:

1. To set a framework for the development of early childhood programmes in the Caribbean;
2. To initiate a Plan of Acton to address early childhood issues in the Caribbean, in terms of policy, structure and implementation; and
3. To facilitate the networking of early childhood education professionals.

It was expected that the Conference would have the following outcomes:

1. Caribbean Plan of Action for Early Childhood Education, Care and Development;
2. Identification of a cadre of people with skills and knowledge of early childhood education in the region;
3. Development and production of a directory of early childhood education professionals, para-professionals and agencies; and
4. Establishment of the Caribbean Association for Early Childhood Education and Development.

Executive Members of the Early Childhood Education Association of Barbados.

The Conference was officially opened by the Honourable Mia Amor Mottley, Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture of Barbados, and remarks were made by Mr. Macharia Kamau, Area Representative, UNICEF Caribbean Area Office; Mrs. Colleen Winter-Brathwaite, Representative, UNESCO; Mr. Herman Grant, Chief Project Officer, Caribbean Development Bank and Her Excellency, Mrs. Colleen Swords, Canadian High Commissioner with the feature address given by Dr. Lilian Katz, Professor of Early Childhood Education at the University of Illinois. (See Appendix I for full text of speech). Miss Shelley Ashby, President of the Early Childhood Education Association of Barbados was named Chairperson of the Conference.

From the outset, Minister Mottley clearly established her Government's commitment to early childhood development programmes which she considered the bedrock to maximising the investment in education at the higher levels. Mr. Macharia Kamau outlined the social and economic reasons why Caribbean governments were duty-bound to invest in early childhood development.

This view had been earlier enunciated by Ms. Shelley Ashby as she expressed her hope that the Conference would inspire the building of a better structure of the sector. But in bringing that structure, Mrs. Colleen Winter-Brathwaite hoped that creativity would not be stifled. Instead it was hoped that caregivers and educators would effectively mould the natural curiosity of this age group into a life long habit. She also wanted the regional follow-up plan to address the inequalities of resources for education.

Mr. Herman Grant addressed this issue in his short remarks and indicated that the Bank was now having to listen to educators to ensure it was indeed supporting the development needs of the society. Her Excellency, Mrs. Colleen Swords highlighted the

contribution being made by the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) to the activities of children in the region.

A SITUATION ANALYSIS

At the Conference, participants considered early childhood education in its broadest sense. They took into account the earliest development needs of children from birth, and viewed education as including the parents, media and other societal influences on a child's evolving capacity. For this reason, the topic of the Conference was redefined in terms of "early childhood education and development".

Conference participants were told that early childhood education and development in the Caribbean is generally afforded a low status, with very small - and diminishing - budgets and, as a result, low coverage of children in the eligible age groups, in spite of steadily increasing demand.

There is a wide variation in quality among the services offered to young children and their parents, with lack of standardization particularly noticeable in private settings. This also relates to fragmentation, overlap and duplication of effort in both day care and pre-school services. There are a great many unregistered or unlicensed centres.

Day care and pre-school services throughout the Caribbean suffer from a severe shortage of well-trained personnel. There are not enough people to train all the early childhood educators needed in the region. The low status, low pay, poor working conditions and limited career advancement opportunities which characterize most day care or pre-school operations discourage many potential teachers from entering the profession. These problems also lead to high staff turnover. Financial problems also contribute to a rapid turnover in private day care centres.

Generally speaking, the main reason for the operation of day care facilities has been to provide support to working parents. Only as a secondary matter has there been any concern to foster children's development. Nevertheless, it is the capacity of early childhood education to promote the fullest possible development which represents its greatest benefit.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ECED

The first years of any child's life are critical to that child's development. No amount of help and support provided in later years can overcome a deficit in development caused by early neglect. Failure to address a child's need for early education and development will cost society as a whole as the child matures, in terms of potential skills not realized, lack of economic progress, and social dysfunction.

By contrast, children whose intellects are stimulated from the earliest possible age, who are encouraged to engage in physical activity that develops all their muscles, and who are able to learn the social skills necessary for life in a free and democratic society will not only be able to contribute to the further development of their country's economy, when they are older, but will also be good citizens who can support and sustain the fundamental values of freedom and participation that underlie Caribbean democracies.

Support to early childhood education and development can start immediately after a child's birth, through programmes designed to help parents promote and encourage the development of their child. Such programmes will be most effective if they take an integrated approach, recognizing the closely linked relationship among physical, mental and emotional well-being.

Programmes for early childhood education and development can overcome the deficits caused by poverty and deprivation. If children come from homes where books are not read, where opportunity for new experiences is severely restricted, and where adults have neither the time nor the energy to provide children with the care and attention they need, these needs can be filled, to some extent, by programmes designed specifically to address the situation of children from deprived backgrounds.

Children who have the opportunity to benefit from structured and well-designed early childhood education and development programmes are more likely to complete school successfully, with fewer drop-outs and fewer repeated grades. This is of particular importance for Caribbean countries, which see that half the children who graduate from primary school have repeated at least one grade, at great cost to both the children and the education system, while many others give up entirely and leave school early.

It is also significant to know that children whose early needs for education and development are met, are also better equipped to take on social responsibilities as they grow older. As the countries of the Caribbean contend with family break-down, social disintegration and increasing violence, appropriate early childhood education and development programmes present the opportunity to forestall such problems for future generations.

IMPROVING QUALITY AS WELL AS AVAILABILITY

Throughout the Conference, participants were concerned with the need to improve the quality of early childhood education and development programmes. While some attention was paid to the need for well-designed and effective programmes to help parents give their children the necessary support for early development of essential skills, the participants identified specific areas in which the structured system of child care and pre-school services could be improved. Measures recommended included: better training of teachers and care givers in the competencies needed to do the best possible job of educating children; increasing the number of teachers or care givers relative to the number of children, to ensure more

The Creative Arts - Drama Workshop in progress.

personal attention to the individual needs of all children; and encouraging greater engagement by the community as a whole in the provision of appropriate and effective early childhood education and development services.

A REGIONAL APPROACH

At the Caribbean Conference on the Rights of the Child, which took place in Belize City from 7 to 10 October, 1996, the governments of the CARICOM countries agreed on the importance of fulfilling the rights of all their children, as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Among those are the right to appropriate child care, and the fundamental right of all children to survival and development.

At the Second Caribbean Conference on Early Childhood Education, there was clear recognition that the situation of Caribbean children could be improved only with a strong regional commitment to action and regional cooperation on major initiatives, such as legislative and regulatory reform, and teacher training.

This recognition was reflected in the two significant steps forward taken at the Conference: the formation of the Caribbean Association for Early Childhood Education and Development and adoption of the Caribbean Plan of Action for Early Childhood Education, Care and Development for 1997 to 2002.

The Caribbean Association will bring together professionals, para-professionals and agencies throughout the Caribbean working in the field of early childhood education and development. It will be an advocacy organization for the improvement of early childhood programmes, and also provide a forum for its members to exchange information and learn from one another's experiences.

The Plan of Action provides a comprehensive guideline for the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of programmes to provide children with the best possible opportunity to learn and develop from the earliest age.

The Plan of Action focuses on the need for mechanisms and strategies to achieve:

- legislative framework for coordinated provision of services and monitoring standards in this sector;
- integrated social planning and implementation of initiatives;
- adequate financing;
- equitable access to quality provisions to minimize the plight of the large percentage of children in high risk situations;
- education and training for all providers of early childhood education and development;
- appropriate curriculum development and materials development;
- increased parent, community and media awareness and involvement;
- coordinated action at both national and regional levels; and
- increased research to inform development of the sector.

Each country will need to revise and adapt the detailed components of the Plan of Action to suit local priorities, needs and circumstances.

At the same time, the Plan of Action can serve as the blueprint for region-wide initiatives to meet the needs and fulfill the rights of young children to education and development.

THE VALUE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT — THE CASE FOR INVESTMENT

At various points throughout the Conference, speakers outlined the factors which should incline governments, international aid donors and others to give priority to support for early childhood education and development. The arguments drew on both practical and ethical considerations to make a compelling case for this basic investment in the future of society as a whole.

LEGAL COMMITMENT

Mr. Macharia Kamau, the Area Representative in the UNICEF Caribbean Area Office, noted in his opening remarks that all countries of the Caribbean were States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Under the terms of the Convention, all the nations of the Caribbean region were, therefore, obliged to provide services that fulfill child rights. In particular, Mr. Kamau, and later Mr. Fabio Sabatini, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer at the UNICEF Caribbean Area Office, cited Articles 18.2 and 18.3 of the Convention:

"18.2. For the purposes of guaranteeing and promoting the rights set forth in the present Convention, States Parties shall render appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities and shall ensure the development of institutions, facilities and services for the care of children.

"18.3. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that children of working parents have the right to benefit from child-care services and facilities for which they are eligible."

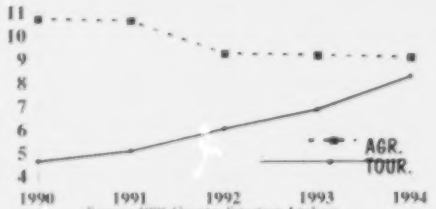
These two paragraphs provide clear direction to governments and society as a whole to make early childhood care and education a priority. However, as Mr. Kamau pointed out, "the challenge, however, is not purely a legal or legislative one. The challenge is truly and fundamentally of a moral and ethical, and developmental character." It also has practical aspects, as Mr. Sabatini demonstrated.

EFFICIENCY AND PERFORMANCE

In his presentation, Mr. Sabatini cited the need "to adjust labour force skills to more complex tasks and sophisticated thinking processes required by rapidly changing production patterns of the 21st century" as essential for economic growth and development in the countries of the Caribbean.

Using statistics drawn from situation analyses of several countries in the region, after making it clear that the examples chosen were not intended in any way to identify some countries as having greater difficulties than any of the others, Mr. Sabatini showed that economic patterns in the region are changing, away from such activities as basic agriculture towards service industries, such as tourism, which require a more sophisticated and varied set of skills from workers.

„WORKERS NEED MORE COMPLEX SKILLS TO ADJUST TO NEW PRODUCTION PATTERNS
Agricultural Decline & Tourism Increase
Percentage Contribution to GDP, Grenada 1990-94



Source: 1990 Country Situation Analysis

High rates of illiteracy in the region were, according to Mr. Sabatini, the outcome of an education system that fails to provide adequately for the children who depend on it. He concluded that "the reason we are not able to maximize educational potential for children is because we start too late. As the saying goes, 'Eight is too late'. We have already lost 50% of the potential development of children because we haven't done anything until age five."

...WHICH THE CURRENT EDUCATION SYSTEM SEEMS NOT TO BE PRODUCING...
Illiteracy Rates, 1993 (Percent)

	Total	Functional	Both
ANB	15.7	17.9	33.6
DOM	18.0	19.4	37.4
STL	27.0	19.0	46.0

It was Mr. Kamau who first pointed out that "fifty percent of the potential intelligence development of all children is done by the age of four...Missing out on proper early childhood care and development puts 50 percent of a child's intellectual development at risk."

This critical point was reinforced by the keynote speaker, Dr. Lilian Katz, Professor of Early Childhood Education at the University of Illinois and Director of the ERIC Clearing House on Elementary and Early Childhood Education.

She explained that "the new research on neurological development indicates that approximately 80% to 85% of the

neurological pathways a person ultimately acquires will develop during the first six years of life, and the rate of growth is steepest in the earliest of those years."

The experiences a child has during those critical formative years will have far-reaching effects. As Dr. Katz said, "any provision for young children — whether in the home or outside of it — that is less than top quality represents missed opportunities to make substantial contributions to the rest of their lives."

On the basis of all the evidence available, Mr. Sabatini could therefore argue that "early childhood development has been proved to increase education system performance and efficiency, through less repetition, drop-out, truancy and failure."

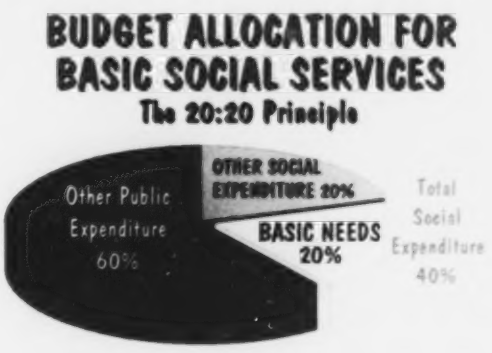
EFFECTIVENESS

Support to early childhood education and development also makes good practical sense in terms of the wider public expenditure, beyond the education system. In his introductory remarks, Mr. Kamau said, "It has been demonstrated that interventions between the ages of zero to five significantly increase returns of social expenditures due to synergies realized among social services that can be provided for in an integrated fashion within a pre-school setting: for example, early stimulation and education, better parenting training for mothers and fathers, as well as child and maternal health. Governments and individuals that invest in early childhood strategies enjoy lower health bills, because of resulting less disabilities, less anaemia, less malnutrition and even less abuse and neglect of children."

Mr. Sabatini carried the argument further, noting how structural adjustment programmes undertaken by governments throughout the region had caused economic hardship. He showed the connection between economic distress, in terms of declines in growth of the Gross Domestic Product, and increasing rates of criminal and socially undesirable activity.

He noted that "the integrated approach to early childhood development facilities can put a cushion or a buffer between the economic hardship and its social effect of children and families", adding that "early childhood development, by having an integrated approach to service delivery, has a synergistic and multiplicative effect which improves how much you're getting out of each dollar that you spend for public provision of services."

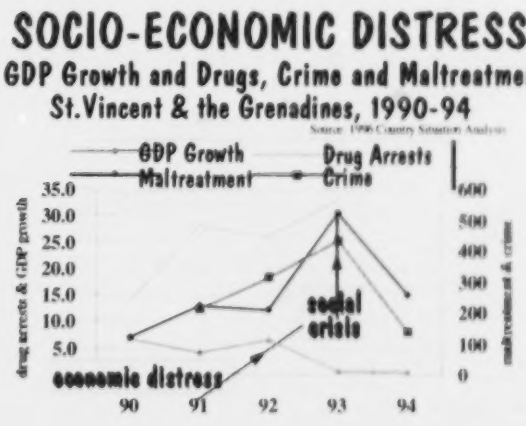
On this basis, he argued for better social targeting of government expenditures, both to increase the overall allocation for basic social services (in keeping with the 20/20 principle enunciated at the World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen) and to direct the services to those most in need of them.



For her part, Dr. Katz focused on the ways in which early childhood education can promote greater security in the broader society. She explained "that unless children achieve minimal social competence by about the age of six, plus or minus half a year, the child is at risk for the rest of his or her life."

The risks are many and serious. Beyond the danger to mental health, Dr. Katz noted that children who do not develop adequate social skills are more likely to drop out of school, to have trouble keeping a job or to have problems themselves with their eventual responsibilities as parents.

Moreover, "there is some reason to suspect that children who are rejected by their peers early, repeatedly eventually find each other, and they get from each other a sense of belonging and intimacy based on their *shared* bitterness and hostility to the rest of the community." She said that these "groups of disaffected youth are analogous to having time bombs in our own back gardens."



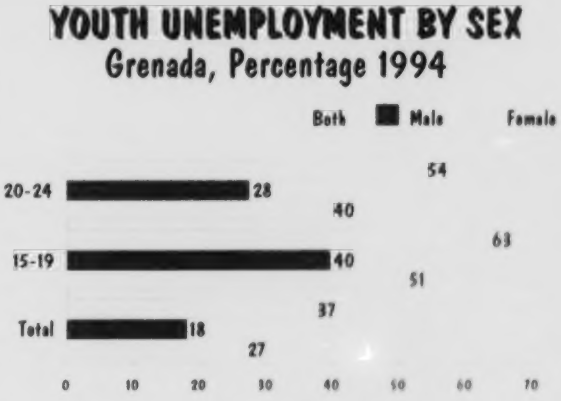
Display from the St. Albans' Infants' School, Barbados.

EQUITY

Mr. Sabatini pointed out that "Caribbean countries suffer from inequities between sexes and among socio-economic classes, and from inequitable intergenerational distribution of resources." He argued that effective early childhood development can mitigate social inequities, by providing equal opportunities to develop and learn for children of both rich and poor.

There are marked disparities in the amounts of money governments spend on schools and students, depending on the income level and location of the community being served. Generally, the available information shows that schools in wealthy urban districts receive more money from government expenditure than do those in poor or rural districts.

This is a particularly acute problem, given that approximately one-third of the people in CARICOM countries, for example, live in poverty.In his presentation, Mr. Sabatini (who was introduced as "an economist with a human face") also noted the inadequacy of traditional economic measures to assess the impact of economic conditions on children.



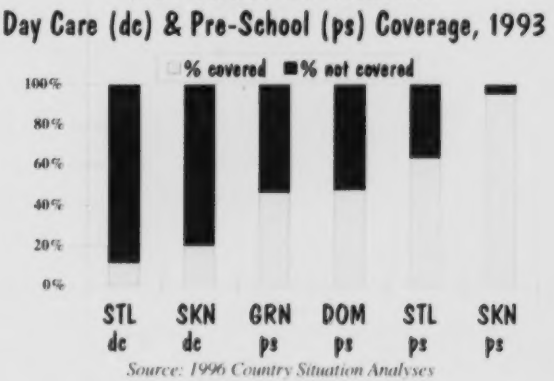
Source: 1996 Countries' Situation Analysis

This concern is closely linked with the problem of insufficient coverage for day care and pre-school in the Caribbean region. Especially in the case of day care facilities (generally for young children of working mothers) the number of spaces available falls far short of the number of children needing the service in many countries.

THE ECONOMICS OF POVERTY...
1 in 3 CARICOM People is Poor

ANB	7,123	JAM	853,332
BAH	12,665	SKN	6,657
BAR	20,416	STL	34,977
BZE	69,188	SVG	18,105
DOM	22,924	SUR	190,350
GRN	19,119	TNT	245,610
GUY	308,915	TOTAL	1,809,381

Source: World Bank 1996 - Poverty Reduction and Human Resource Development in the Caribbean



Source: 1996 Country Situation Analyses

"The working population increased in the past decade or so for men and women. An **economic** evaluation will consider this as a net positive gain for the poor, as the number of working hours in the household has increased and unemployment is reduced, but it will disregard the fact that less time is available for child care. A **child-centred** social accountancy system would have to evaluate the gains to society: **has children's physical, intellectual and emotional development also improved** when their caregivers or parents work for more hours?"

Both Mr. Kamau and Mr. Sabatini also expressed great concern for the intergenerational inequities in education expenditure throughout the region.

Taking Trinidad and Tobago as an example, they both noted that the government spends only TT$385 per year on each pre-school student, while making annual expenditures of TT$20,875 for each tertiary level student.

SKEWED INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION

Per Capita Expenditure and the Poor By Education Level, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, '93

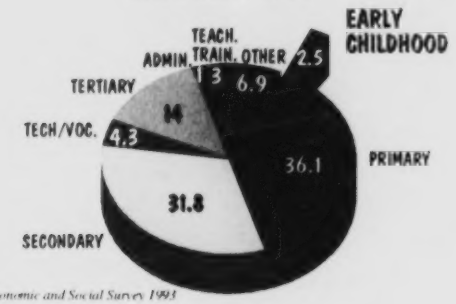
Level	% RE	% CE	Per Capita	% poor/total roll
Pre-Primary	0.2	0	385	n/a
Primary	42.3	77.6	1,976	27.30
Secondary	32.8	11.4	3,029	22.30
Tech/Voc	4.2	1	6,799	13.80
Tertiary	11.4	0	20,875	4.20

Source: World Bank 1995

Trinidad and Tobago is not the only country to show this pattern. Rather, it is typical of the region as a whole. Another example, from Jamaica, shows that 14% of the education budget is spent on tertiary education, compared to only 2.5% for early childhood.

SKEWED INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION

Expenditure Distribution by Education Level (% JAMAICA, 1993



Source: Economic and Social Survey 1993

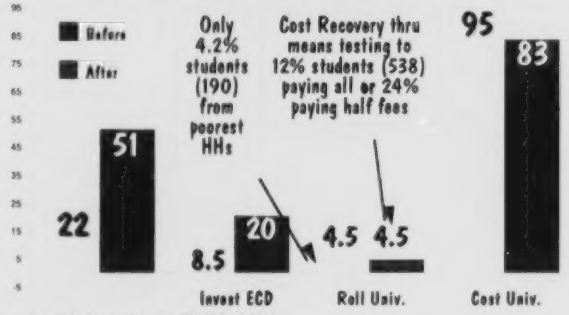
Mr. Kamau asked, "Does the discrepancy between what governments spend on university students in the Caribbean and what they spend on pre-schoolers have to be so high? What is the economic or social justification of this variance? Is four years of university education that much more valuable to society than four years of edu-care or pre-school? And can a better balance be struck between government expenditure on pre-schools and universities?"

And he noted that "studies have shown that the returns to society and to individuals in general are significantly more for children who have been through pre-school...than returns gained by and individual and society, on average, because of tertiary learning."

Mr. Sabatini made a good case for the affordability of early childhood education and development programmes. In a direct response to Mr. Kamau's final question, Mr. Sabatini demonstrated that, if students who could afford to were required to pay all or part of the costs of their university education, there would be sufficient additional funds available in the education budget of Trinidad and Tobago to increase the investment in early childhood development and, in the process, make pre-school education available and accessible to all children in the target age group (only a fraction of whom are currently benefitting from services available).

NO PAIN, LOTS OF GAIN

Comparative Impact of Resource Shift to ECD TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, 1993



Source: Own Calculations, based on World Bank 1995

The value of making early childhood education available to children of the poor was stressed by Mr. Kamau. "We have seen that where government supports communities in providing for day care and early childhood programmes, poor families participate fully in the utilization of these services to the benefit of the economy and the entire society."

WHAT MOTHERS WANT

The final argument in favour of granting increased priority to early childhood services is based on democratic principles: it represents one of the highest priorities of the people themselves, especially the poorest segments of the population.

Mr. Sabatini demonstrated this by showing the results of a 1995 survey conducted by the Caribbean Development Bank in St. Lucia, in which day care centres and pre-schools were placed at the top of the list of priorities most frequently mentioned in focus group sessions.

This interest reflects the fact, also pointed out by Mr. Sabatini that there are more female headed households in the poorer segments of the population than among those who are well-off, and so it is much more likely that female heads of household will have to work, and will therefore need to find adequate and appropriate care for their children while they are away from

home. Once again, support to early childhood services makes good economic as well as social sense, because it frees mothers to work, thereby contributing toward both family income and the growth of the overall economy, while also promoting gender equity in the workforce.

In summary, investment in early childhood education produces significant returns for both society and the individual. It results in long-term savings for other social expenditures that are directed to dealing with problems later in life which can be more easily resolved or prevented with early interventions. It eases the effects of economic hardship on the poor, who account for substantial proportion of the population of the Caribbean region, and it provides the basis for acquisition of economically worthwhile skills which can contribute to increased employment and a healthy growing economy. It enables parents to take better care of their own children and it enables society to fulfill its responsibility to respect and promote the rights of children.

Dr. Katz, in her keynote address, drew all these considerations together succinctly. "I really believe each of us must come to care about everyone else's children. We must come to see that the well-being of our own children can only be secured when the well-being of all other people's children is also secure...But to care about others' children is not just a practical matter; it is also the *right* thing to do."

LISTENING TO THE COMMUNITY

Frequency Distribution of Focus Group Priorities ST.LUCIA Poverty Assessment Survey, 1993

11 of the poorest communities in St. Lucia identified priority programmes which in their views would assist them in reducing poverty.

SERVICE	FREQ.
Day Care Centre/Pre-school	5
Family Life Education/FP	5
Literacy/Tech/Vocational	5
Land/Housing/Electricity	4
Old Age Pensions	4
Garbage/Waste	4
Water	3

Source:
1995 CDB Poverty Assessment Study

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE CARIBBEAN

Before plans could be made for putting into place a system of early childhood education and development to meet the needs and fulfill the rights of children in the Caribbean, it was necessary to clarify the current situation.

Mrs. Janet Brown, Director of the Caribbean Child Development Centre in Jamaica, together with Dr. Kerida McDonald, a consultant at the Centre, and Dr. Carol Logie, a Lecturer in Early Childhood Education at the University of the West Indies in Trinidad and Tobago, presented the results of analyses and surveys conducted throughout the English-speaking Caribbean and Suriname, to determine the situation of early childhood education in the region.

Dr. McDonald detailed the process that had been followed for the collection of information, including review of 12 situation analyses or specific country reports on early childhood education, as well as responses to a pre-conference questionnaire which had been designed to identify priority concerns.

She noted that it was too early in the collection of data to undertake a detailed analysis, but the information available had identified the major themes which will need to be addressed.

To begin, she put the analysis in the context of regional socio-economic trends, including structural adjustment policies and declining economic growth. She pointed out that "the fact that there has been a reduction in social spending has implications for early childhood care and education, in the sense that services are paid for by families," and expressed concern that "we don't have day care centres and pre-schools being subsidized and ... we don't have day care programmes that can monitor these services", with resulting problems for families, especially those with the most limited resources.

There has been a rapid increase in female participation in the labour force, mostly in low-status and low-paying jobs, while changes in occupational and family patterns have caused disintegration of the extended family network that used to provide care for children. This is aggravated in some cases of female migration. The children of the women who go are the "barrel children" who have been left behind, virtually fending for themselves.

Social dysfunction and disintegration have also led to increasing levels of violence in all parts of the region.

Even what seems to be good news carries unexpected costs. There has been a steady improvement in child health in the region, with low levels of mortality and morbidity and a much reduced rate of communicable disease, thanks to immunization programmes. As a result, there are more children in need of early education services.

Early childhood education is generally accorded a low status, and this affects the way in which programmes are implemented. The most obvious evidence of this is the small proportion of government expenditure allocated to early childhood education and development. In fact, budgets are declining in spite of significant increases in the demand for day care services.

One of the most critical problems, which was a constant theme throughout the conference, was the need to improve the quality of all early childhood education and development services. Dr. McDonald identified a cycle which reflects the problem of maintaining quality in the system.

To offer quality programmes, the staff need to be adequately trained. Well-trained teachers expect proper working conditions, including a high ratio of adults to children in the programmes offered. To achieve this, more staff are needed, which in turn requires additional resources. For additional resources to be allocated, the people who make decisions about funding want to see an appropriate return on their investment. In order to demonstrate such returns, the programmes offered need to be of sustained high quality. And that leads back to the beginning, and the need for trained staff.

The regional analysis showed specific problems with failure to keep staff/child records, with low staff evaluations, and with classrooms that were teacher-controlled and teacher-centred. There is a wide variation in quality which relates to the lack of standardization, particularly in the private centres, which dominate the pre-primary sector. This is linked to the high level of unregistered or unlicensed centres. Some problems in adhering to standards that do exist are due to limitations in economic, physical and human resources.

There is limited research on early childhood education and development. The media do not take much interest in these issues, providing only token coverage during special periods, such as Child Month, and tending towards sensationalization. Local media offer few programmes for young children, with very little local programming.

Studies show that centre-based approaches do not adequately serve the needs of families, particularly the poorest. For example, 50% of children aged 0-2 in St. Kitts and Nevis are cared for at home, and 25% more in home-based day care, so interventions would be more effective if they focused on work in the homes of young children. As already noted, teacher training is a factor in this. However, there is a shortage of teacher training personnel. Low pay, low status, poor working conditions and limited career advancement opportunities for day care and pre-school providers lead to high staff turnover. There is also a high rate of turnover of private centres.

The Creative Arts - Arts & Crafts Workshop in progress.

Country reports noted that the vast majority of services are not based on developmentally sound principles. Problems identified include: the high ratio of children to adults; limited outdoor activity due to lack of space and/or outdoor equipment; uninviting environments that offer few choices to young children; lack of concrete learning materials; difficulty in sustaining a supply of consumable materials such as paper, crayons and markers; a school culture more typical of a primary school setting; and a focus in language development on isolated skills such as recognizing letters, reciting the alphabet and forming letters.

Lack of a clear definition of the age range served by early childhood programmes leads to an overlap in coverage between day care centres and pre-schools. Each country seems to have a different definition of the age range and target group for early childhood programmes.

Dr. McDonald noted that the primary stimulus for many day care programmes is to support working parents. Fostering children's development is often a secondary goal. This has a direct effect on the quality of the programmes offered.

Dr. Logie spoke in reference to the specific situation of early childhood education in Trinidad and Tobago, based on both a national survey on early education conducted in 1992 and a study she conducted in 1996. In her own study, she visited and assessed programmes at 79 centres. Prior to 1992, early childhood care and education was not considered part of the formal education system of Trinidad and Tobago, and there are no structured data for the years before that.

Until 1996, the government of Trinidad and Tobago did not have any budget allocation specifically for early childhood education. In that year, the government decided to build new pre-schools, and so undertook a formal programme. Nevertheless, as Mr. Sabatini had already demonstrated, the amount allocated in the government budget to early childhood education was quite small, relative to other expenditures.

Dr. Logie reported that most centres in Trinidad and Tobago are privately run and of varied quality. Some 24% are either government-run or government-assisted (the latter being operated by an NGO, SERVOL), while about 6% are owned and operated by religious bodies. Many of the government and government-assisted centres offer only part-day programmes, although the teachers consider themselves full-time employees and would expect any expansion in the hours of operation to be matched by increases in remuneration. Centres operated by the private sector offer longer days and more varied schedules which are more effective at meeting the needs of parents who work.

Class sizes, which fluctuate from one term to another, vary widely in both systems. The maximum size of classes visited by Dr. Logie was 38 in the government system and 31 in the private sector, while minimum sizes were, respectively, three and eight. More classes are too large than too small, however.

From her observations, she concluded that children in both systems spend a large part of the day "waiting and watching". Their activities are "driven by what the adult tells them to do." And she wondered, "Is it difficult for us to give up control, as educators?"

She suggested that training programmes would have to address this issue if the learning environment is to be child-centred and let children develop their self-esteem and language skills in their own way.

In her assessment, Dr. Logie considered the following quality indicators:

1. children's activities;
2. centre-based practices;
3. the socio-emotional development of the children;
4. the interpersonal environment; and
5. community involvement in the delivery of the programme.

For the assessment of classroom practice, she used an instrument developed by M. Hyson, K. Hirch-Pasek and L. Rescorla, based on work done by S. Bredekamp.

She found that children engaged in a number of different activities during the day, but these were tightly controlled by a timetable. "Locked into the timetable, the children sometimes get shuffled from one to the next." Teacher-centred activities dominated. "It was very rare, particularly in the private setting, that children were given the opportunities they needed to explore the environment."

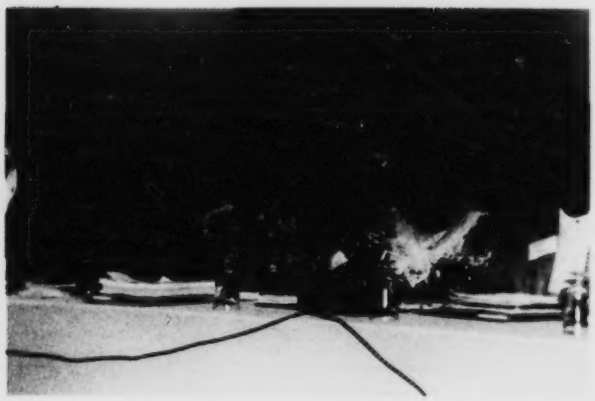
In 60% of the private centres there was no opportunity for children to be involved in concrete three-dimensional activities, while most government and SERVOL centres did provide such opportunity. In 69% of private centres, teachers told children exactly what to do, and expected them to do it. This was less common in the government and SERVOL centres visited.

"What we observed is that children tend, in the private setting, to be involved in academic activities most of the day, and teachers expect children to continue those academic activities and see them as being appropriate. If we feel that children should also be working in small groups, what are the implications for training?...What does this does this say for us in the Caribbean region? How can we deal with it in our own cultural environment and the downward press of a Common Entrance Exam? How do we look at it in the light of the pressures parents face and feel for the kinds of programmes that exist today? What is our responsibility as educators to pass the word on in terms of what is appropriate and inappropriate?"

Dr. Logie identified the basic causes of these problems as:

- poor training
- no training
- pressure from parents to retain traditional models (implying a need to work with parents to change attitudes and bring about change)
- lack of explicit minimal standards for programme delivery
- limited practical modules in training programmes.

Dr. Logie concluded on a more optimistic note, informing Conference participants that the government of Trinidad and Tobago, with the decision to designate a budget line for early childhood education, is supporting both pre-service and in-service training for teachers. A five year plan to train 130 teachers has begun with a seven-week training course for 27 facilitators. Efforts are being made to harmonize curricula across the entire system. Teachers with certification have recently been given an increase in salary which has raised their income to just over the level of the minimum wage.



Delegates from the US Virgin Islands and Professor Lilian Katz at extreme right.

A QUEST FOR QUALITY

In their presentations, both Dr. McDonald and Dr. Logie raised concerns about the quality of education offered to young children in the existing systems (public and private).

Dr. Lilian Katz also dealt with quality-related issues in her keynote address, offering a more positive vision of what was possible, in terms of both curriculum and teacher preparation

Dr. Katz's point of departure was the capacities children bring with them into any learning situation. In spite of differences in their experiences before entering early childhood programmes, "all children come to school with lively minds, with the inborn disposition to make sense of their experience, of their observations, and of their feelings. A good early childhood programme supports and nurtures this inborn disposition to actively investigate and make sense of experience."

She encouraged Conference participants to bear in mind the distinction between intellectual goals and academic goals. (A distinction Dr. Logie also referred to.) "They are different. In the early years, our focus should be on the intellectual goals."

Later, she explained, "Academic tasks are small, disembedded items usually taught in isolation, requiring the right answers, relying heavily on memory, the application of formulae (versus understanding), and the regurgitation of specific items learned from formal instruction. Furthermore, academic tasks are devoted to learning skills rather than to deepening understanding...

"Intellectual goals and activities, on the other hand, are focused on the life of the mind in its fullest sense, including the aesthetic, moral and spiritual sensibilities." It is these areas, she argued, that need the greatest attention and effort in early childhood education programmes.

Senator Cynthia Forde, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture of Barbados, like Mrs. Colleen Winter-Brathwaite, UNESCO Representative, raised similar concerns in the Feature Address, given during the Closing Session. She asked, "Have you ever wondered why happy, bubbly, bright, active children at four and five cry out of being bored at seven and eight? ... Too many of them are forced to read and write because of a number of factors, and we all know them: lack of training of staff; lack of resource materials;... pupil/teacher ratio... and then there's the parent and teacher expectation..."

Mrs. Rose Davies, Lecturer in the Faculty of Education at the Mona Campus of the University of the West Indies, discussed the elements that enter into the delivery of quality early childhood education.

She cautioned that, even though early childhood developmen programmes have undergone rapid expansion in recent years, "the provision of early childhood programmes is not of itself an automatic guarantee of improved child development outcomes. Research has shown that it is the quality of the individual

programme which does. As countries internationally tend toward boosted investment in early childhood programming, the issue of quality has become a focal point of debate."

She noted that the first step toward quality in early childhood education is the creation of a supportive environment, from both "the broad or macro perspective of government, community and regional inputs to the process" and the "micro or, to borrow Lilian Katz's terminology, the 'inside' environment of early childhood programmes."

THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

The paper "From Belize to Barbados: Affording Children their rights from Birth", presented by Mrs. Janet Brown, outlined the conditions necessary for a supportive external environment.

Mrs. Brown began from the discussions and decisions at the Caribbean Conference on the Rights of the Child, which took place in Belize City in October 1996. "Conference participants identified critical steps for child protection and care, amongst which was the role of day care in the lives of young children and their families, and some very interesting recommendations were made. First, participants noted that even when day care was privately run, such as in home-based centres, there should still be an involvement by the community and by the government because, as the delegates said in their report, 'after all, the care and protection of children is everybody's business'."

From the Belize recommendations, Mrs. Brown identified three which indicated the breadth of social responsibility for early childhood education and development:

1. Day care is seen as a matter of concern for everyone in the society, not a private family need met by any means that a family can afford; and society here is seen as a combination of forces within the community and government.

2. Training must include all those involved with the young child, and in particular the parent because he or she is the first educator of the child.

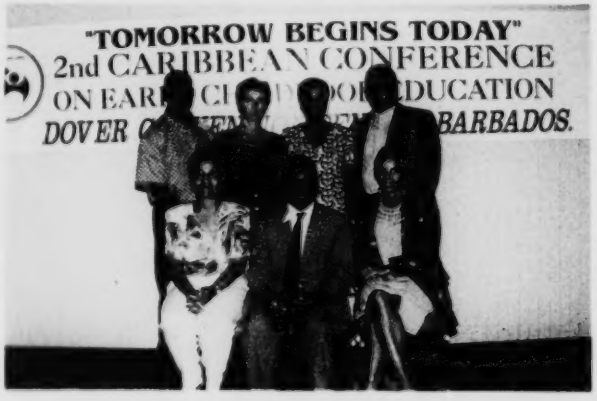
3. To provide effective services requires support from a social partnership of those with economic stakes, such as the vested interests the private sector and government have in stability and productivity; governmental concerns for the safety and viability of services to children, which require standards and monitoring in order to be effective; community concerns for the health and development of children; and family concerns for their individual sons and daughters.

Mrs. Brown referred to the recommendation made in Belize for a collaborative approach within the region, both to share resources needed to comply with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and to learn from each other's experience. She outlined some of the experiences in individual countries which might be of interest and help to others.

Some countries in the region were developing legislation to entrench child rights in national law, and to provide specific protections as required by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In addition, some countries like Barbados have already developed national standards and guidelines for child care and early childhood education, while others were now getting started Mrs. Brown referred specifically to the experience of Belize, where the National Committee for Families and Children has developed guidelines, an operational manual and a training manual for day care providers, while in Jamaica standards developed after a national survey of day care centres are currently before Parliament.

One of the most critical needs for the development of effective policies, programmes and standards for quality early childhood education is information about what is actually happening in the field. Mrs. Brown noted that there is a marked lack of data in the region on young children, before they enter school. She offered the example of the PROFILES Project in Jamaica as a model for other countries in the region to use in "developing planning instruments and institutionalizing a system of data collection, analysis, and use in planning for young children."

Mrs. Angela Dekker from the Netherlands Antilles suggested, during the discussion, that countries of the region should share research results in areas of common interest. She added, "If we could make use of the same criteria, it's easier to share information and I believe more interesting".



Jamaican Delegation to the Conference.

THE "INSIDE" ENVIRONMENT

Mrs. Davies described an approach to monitoring programme quality in early childhood education and development, based on guidelines for "developmentally appropriate practices" (or DAP) developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

"There are two dimensions to programme quality. The structural or static dimension includes such factors as:

- physical facilities;
- space per child;
- physical room arrangement;
- availability of appropriate materials and equipment;
- arrangements for meeting children's basic care, health and nutritional needs;
- group size, and ratio of teachers and caregivers to children;
- teachers' qualifications.

"The dynamic or process dimension covers those programme aspects that are more often sensed than seen, for instance:

- the climate of social interaction between adults and children, children and children, children and adults;
- the curriculum process, in particular the hidden aspects;
- parent-staff relations

"The dynamic dimension is far more important than the static in determining child outcomes. However, research shows that the static features of a programme environment do serve to facilitate constructive interaction between adults and children. Hence, they affect the dynamic environment and ultimately children's developmental outcomes."

The Teachers

For many presenters and participants who commented in the discussion periods, the role of the teacher was essential to the delivery of quality early childhood education. Ms. Ruby Yorke, a participant from Saint Lucia, said during one of the discussions, "Quality's a burning issue in our region...The quality of staff and the quality of programmes go hand in glove. There must be basic standards that are adhered to by everyone, without exception. The basic qualification of a love for children is insufficient."

One important issue was the adult/child ratio, which varied so widely in the study conducted by Dr. Logie. Dr. Katz had addressed this issue in her keynote address. In the context of promoting positive socialization of young children, Dr. Katz said that "teachers cannot help them unless the teacher/pupil ratio is low enough to permit frequent individualized interaction between children and adults, and a close monitoring of social engagement in the classroom."

Mrs. Davies also discussed the importance of a low ratio of children to adults for all aspects of child development. "When adults have too many children in their charge, there is likely to be much less verbal interaction and social exchange between adult and child, and consequently less benefits accruing to the child. The conclusions and recommendations from research have led many developed countries to set standards limiting group size for three- to five-year olds to ranges between 16 and 25 children, with one adult to 10 or 12 children. For toddlers, one to eight with a maximum group size of 15, and one to four for infants with a maximum group size of eight."

She noted, however, that limited financial resources in "countries such as ours" might require larger classes, with more children for each adult to look after.

Dr. Katz also stressed the ways in which a good teacher can overcome disadvantages such as lack of materials or a poor learning environment. "I suggest the best way to ensure good education and development for all the tomorrows is by focusing our collective and individual energies on the quality of the day-to-day interactions we have with children so that those interactions are rich, interesting, engaging, satisfying, and meaningful as we can make them. For teachers, I suggest: don't drain your energy on blaming conditions, politicians, or officials, or the parents, and anyone or anything else. For those outside the classroom I suggest focusing on the ways to support teachers in every possible way so that their energy and skills are not diverted from the essential matter of the daily lives they lead with children."

Participants were very much concerned about how to improve and expand training for early childhood teachers and caregivers. Mrs Davies noted, "Young children need skilled and competent teachers and caregivers to guide their development as much as or perhaps more than at any other level... Specialized training is associated with more positive adult/child interaction, helpfulness, encouragement, less restrictive behaviour and less punitiveness, promotion of verbal skills, and higher social and cognitive competence in children."

The plans for in-service and pre-service training of early childhood teachers in Trinidad and Tobago, described by Dr. Logie, indicated one way to respond to the need for more highly qualified teachers. But smaller countries in the Caribbean may not be able to develop such programmes on their own. Several suggestions were made for regional training programmes which could use jointly developed training courses and materials, distance education methods and mentoring systems.

Mrs. Brown told participants about an innovative programme that the Caribbean Child Development Centre was developing with vocational training institutes in Jamaica, a programme for "competency-based" training. The Centre would determine the essential skills, or competencies, needed for effective early childhood educators, and the vocational institutes would teach those skills in a specifically focused and intensive programme.

Mrs. Davies pointed out that "specific curriculum training through staff in-service programmes and follow-up support has also been shown in the High Scope experience to be most successful in promoting programme quality. This kind of systematic training in the specifics of curriculum implementation is especially important where possession of professional qualifications by teachers is not widespread, as obtains in our situation."

What is Taught

The development and application of curricula which respond to the children's needs and ways of learning (the "pattern-seeking" and exploratory capacities described by Dr. Katz) is essential for quality early childhood education, as is respecting the distinction between intellectual goals and academic goals (also described by Dr. Katz) for the various age groups.

Mrs. Davies outlined the broad characteristics of a quality curriculum, saying, "such a curriculum is learner-centred, promotes child-initiated and interactive learning, employs instructional approaches that are embedded in a child's natural love of play, and takes into account the child's current skill level and experiences."

An innovative approach to teaching content was described by Dr. Megan Goodridge, Special Projects Officer in the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture of Barbados. She called her theoretical framework "co-constructivism". The approach has been applied successfully in different cultural communities in New Zealand, and is now being applied in conjunction with the "Parent Volunteer Support Programme" in several Barbadian schools.

In essence, this model provides children with the opportunity to create their own learning tools from their own experience, with help and support from adults who may have specific skills the children still have not fully developed. Thus, children can create their own stories from their day-to-day experiences. These are written out by a supporting adult, and then can serve as texts for subsequent classes. The adults — parents as well as teachers — use the child's language in writing the story. The children learn to work collaboratively in situations in which they take the lead.

In her feature address, Senator Forde also suggested the use of personal experience and traditional stories to help children learn. "I challenge all Caribbean people to work diligently with young children, to share some of your childhood experiences with them, to help them develop an interest in and an appreciation of their respective cultures through traditional games... Also, tell them stories about Anansi, about Brer Rabbit and Brer Fox... Teach them the traditional songs... Help them to develop appetites for local foods... Teach them to be responsible."

An important part of the teaching process with young children involves the use of materials, including educational toys,

Display from the Wilkie Cumberbatch School, Barbados.

books and equipment for games. Lack of the proper materials was a continuing concern throughout the Conference. A number of suggestions were made for ways to secure local production of materials, as a means of promoting economic growth while also satisfying the needs of the early childhood programmes.

Thus, Mrs. Catherine Blackman, Education Officer - Nursery and Infant Education, Barbados suggested that the whole Caribbean should come together to make their own teaching materials to reflect the lives of the children, their environment and their culture. Mrs. Davies proposed pooling of resources between countries, suggesting that it should be possible to find appropriate ways to share even copyright materials. There was some interest from Mr. Desmond Durant, Project Officer for Human Resources Development with the Caribbean Development Bank, in supporting materials production projects. For her part, Senator Forde reminded participants that flour and dye made a good substitute for plasticine, and local carpenters could provide blocks of wood that were scrap for them but could serve children as building blocks.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The model of the "Parent Volunteer Support Programme" described by Dr. Goodridge reflected another important strand that ran throughout the Conference: the conviction that effective early childhood education requires the full support of parents and the broader community.

During one of the discussion periods, Mrs. Rosamund Renard of Saint Lucia emphasized this.

"I think there is a need to understand quality and that quality cannot be achieved unless all stakeholders are involved, stakeholders being the children, the staff, the volunteers, government, private sector, parents, board and the wider community. Naturally, this is arrived at through continued education and through the meaningful involvement of the different stakeholders...

Senator Cynthia Forde, of Barbados (second from left) addresses the Conference.

"When community-based early childhood education is realized, financed and sustainability is achieved. There is an input of money through individual donors from the community, and through other community fundraising and probably almost as much as half comes from individual donors in the community or in the larger diaspora of the nation from the community or in the wider diaspora from around the world.

"Financial sustainability is achieved also because time is put in, both by at-risk volunteers, poor people, and middle- and higher-income volunteers...In addition to this, through community-based education, when all stakeholders are involved, the community achieves pride, dignity, negotiation with the wider society, reciprocal responsibility and democracy. For this to be achieved, there is a need to strengthen and sustain NGOs."

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Conference also provided the opportunity for hands-on training and professional development in workshops which covered four major areas: (1) curriculum development; (2) teacher education and administration; (3) assessment and evaluation of programmes and practices; and (4) schools and communities in partnership.

Curriculum Development

Over ten workshops covered a diverse range of issues under this theme. The role that early childhood education plays in the development of a number of skills was highlighted, focussing specifically on the use of cooperative learning activities to promote academic learning through peer cooperation and communication; articulatory mechanisms and strategies which assist children in acquiring communicative competence in the development of their oral language skills; and the use of literature in the early childhood classroom as a means of developing life long readers. The exploratory element involved in the interactive use of computers in the classroom was also recommended as a means for the development of young minds.

Building the skills and values necessary for daily live in a peaceful, healthy and democratic society were also among the issues discussed in workshop sessions. It was agreed that skill development need to start from infancy and be reinforced throughout a child's life, both in and out of school.

Creative Arts - dance, puppetery, music and drama - was presented as a very important component of the Early Childhood Education Programme. The workshops in these areas proposed rationales for their integration into the Early Childhood Education curriculum, and highlighted a number of meaningful activities to which children can be exposed. The sessions, which were interactive, featured singing, listening, rhythm and movement, and showed their usefulness in stimulating learning, and helping the child to develop his/her attention span, follow directions, retain infomation, sequence activities and aid in problem solving and conflict resolution.

Teacher education and administration

A major workshop in this area spearheaded by Erdiston Teachers' Training College, Barbados focussed on the impact of staff development on teachers and assessed this influence on school improvement. Other sessions in this area focussed on more specialised areas. One workshop examined the key role played by the early childhood educator in the identification and treatment of children experiencing developmental delays and disabilities. It examined the general goals of early education of young children with these characteristics, and the knowledge, attitudes and approaches which are most effective in catering to these special needs. Another workshop focussed on the identification and teaching of gifted students. The presentation noted that there was no consensus on the definition of giftedness, and featured discussions on the academically, creatively, kinesthetically and psychologically gifted.

Participants also benefitted from a session on interpersonal skills, which aimed at improving teacher/parent/child collaboration in the best interest of children.

Assessment and Evaluation

Workshops in this area ranged from the assessment of early childhood literacy to early childhood care and education curricula in Trinidad and Tobago. In the latter, the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) and the Classroom Practices Inventory (CPI) were used to assess the early childhood environment and the quality of curricula in diverse setting in Trinidad and Tobago. The findings were that centres in Trinidad and Tobago are of an inadequate quality on a number of measures. However, it also found that public centres are of a higher quality compared to those which are owned or managed privately.

Display from the Ignatius Byer Primary School, Barbados.

Also featuring Trinidad and Tobago was a workshop which examined aspects of quality care evident in some infant/toddler group care settings in Trinidad. Here the need for adequate legislation and a governmental body responsible for registration, licensing and supervision of centres was highlighted. Issues such as financing, total quality management, meeting the needs of the changing family structure, training of staff, programme content, alternatives to group care and the encroaching threat of AIDS were also discussed.

Schools and communities in partnerships

The increasing recognition of the ways in which parent-school relationships can be enhanced for the mutual benefit of the schools, families and their communities was the central focus of the remaining seven workshops. To this end, three regional examples were explored, the Jamaican and St. Lucian experience in implementing community-based models of pre-school education; and the Parent Volunteer Support Programme of the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture and the National Council of Parent Teacher Associations (NCPTA) in Barbados. The latter is aimed at implementing policy for the provision of quality Early Childhood Education, and involves parents working in partnership with principals and nursery unit teachers in a pilot programme involving twelve selected primary schools, and in ten schools which participated voluntarily. Activities have included the development and use of portfolio assessment and profiling, checklists on literacy and social expertise, and children's reading materials.

Strong emphasis was placed in the workshops on the parent/teacher interface. An overview of the stages of parenting was presented, including approaches to parent development and parental expectations and roles throughout the child's growth cycle.

Special issues within this theme of schools and communities in partnerships included, the inter-relation between home and school in maximising practical mathematical opportunities in the home which can enhance the learning experience; and the requirements of parents with special needs children, and the strategies which teachers can use to provide support. In the latter, a model for designing parental involvement was presented.

Enhancing the coping skills of parents and teachers of children in conflict situations was also addressed. In this session issues such as the breakdown in parent/child relationships and the increase in disruptive behaviours of children at home and in the classroom were considered. The workshop presented communication and problem solving skills as effective strategies for resolving conflicts and enhancing the parent/child, teacher/child relationships, and to promote partnerships between parents and teachers. The National Council of Parent Teacher Associations (NCPTA) of Barbados, Parent Education for Development in Barbados (PAREDOS) and the Barbados Child Care Board were but three of the resource organisations which hosted workshops for the benefit of participants.

INTEGRATED APPROACHES TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Dr. Kerida McDonald spoke about her experience with the development of an integrated approach to early child care in Jamaica.

"This story is about integration and how the Jamaican task force on the integration and mainstreaming of early childhood education went through a process of trying to achieve commitment to the integrated services of early childhood in Jamaica...We have been dealing with programming for children in a very isolated fashion, mostly because problems related to children have been looked at in an isolated way, highly specialized, so that nutritional problems are looked at by nutritionists and health problems are looked at by health specialists and because of that we have a number of different departments delivering services for children, such as the maternal and child health, nutrition service, dental service, family planning service, and community health service. That's just within the Ministry of Health.

"And within the Ministry of Education, pre-school training is generally handled by one department while the nutrition concerns are addressed by others."

In contrast to the way governments organize the delivery of services to young children, children themselves develop in an integrated fashion. Dr. McDonald used the example of how a disease such as diarrhoea affects nutrient uptake, while low levels of nutrient uptake weaken the immune system and make the child more vulnerable to infection.

She added, "Now we have evidence from research that even psychosocial elements of development affect nutrition and health. There have been studies showing that if babies are stroked and touched there will be better nutrition intake and better growth. And if there is psychological stress it would give a converse relationship, there would be lower energy metabolism and a weaker immune response."

The integration initiative in Jamaica was influenced by both the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and by the 1995 Social Summit in Copenhagen. At the national level, four evaluations were considered: the national day care evaluation, the pre-school evaluation, the situation analysis of children and women, and a base-line study conducted by USAID on disadvantaged youth and the kind of programmatic responses that could be developed to help them.

Those studies had identified problems which required new approaches:

- fragmentation and duplication of effort in early childhood provision;
- an increasing number of three-year-olds being dealt with (inappropriately) in basic schools, which were not designed for children that young, but basic schools cost less than day care;
- low coverage by the day care system, particularly in rural areas;
- repeated transfers of the Day Care Unit among five different Ministries;
- inequitable distribution of human resources and community supports for the day care system in relation to the basic school system, for example, five day care officers as compared to 65 basic school officers;
- lack of curriculum guidance for early childhood education;
- lack of ongoing day care support programmes;
- lack of accreditation system for early childhood education personnel in general;
- inappropriate monitoring systems;
- inappropriate practice in both day care centres and pre-schools;
- generally low levels of support for, understanding of, and commitment to early child development by the government and the public sector.

The integration task force came together as a result of discussions sparked by a meeting to develop the new UNICEF Country Programme for 1997-2000 for Jamaica. The task force took as its mission, "To mobilize the energies and resources of all relevant players and to advise the government on the effective integration of systems for improvement and expanded delivery of early childhood education, care and development services."

The task force then developed proposals for integrated programming which were presented to the Ministries of Health and Education and to the Planning Institute. These included a model for integration and a plan for the implementation of the initial phase of the integration programme. A committee has now been set up within the Ministry of Education to carry the work of integration forward.

World Bank funding was granted for specific integrations activities, such as the competency workshops conducted by the Caribbean Child Development Centre and the Institute of Education at the University of the West Indies to design levels of competency that would be required for teachers across the system.

Dr. McDonald identified several reasons for the task force's success in securing acceptance of the concept of integrated approaches to child development programming.

The task force had access to substantive research which provided factual support for their proposals. They had a forum in which to present issues and enable stakeholders to recognize common problems. Although the task force was not appointed by any Ministry or Department, it had a high level of representation in key posts. And the definition of the mission in the early stages of the task force's work assured "that there was a shared understanding of what we were trying to do".

Members of the task force were able to do "a lot of sensitization and lobbying". In addition to direct advocacy with government officials, they also used television and radio to share experiences and explain their objectives. They were also able to provide models which showed what the task force was trying to achieve in clear and comprehensible terms. Finally, the task force members were sensitive to process and protocol — they knew whom to speak to, when to speak, what to say and how to say it so as to be sure of favourable hearing.

One of the models the task force used came from and integrated service programme for children up to age six in the Philippines. Dr. McDonald explained that this programme uses a life cycle approach which recognizes that children need different kinds and combinations of services at different ages. In Jamaica, the Early Childhood Resource Centre is the focus for implementing the integration initiative, in the Ministry of Education, the Day Care Unit and the Early Childhood Unit to increase the monitoring capacity of the day care system. Day care centres and basic schools will now be dealt with together, rather than separately, and there is a plan to promote creation of day care sections in existing pre-schools, "where there is an appropriate learning environment for them" to facilitate transition from day care to pre-school.

Community services will be coordinated by Community Child Promoters, para-professionals trained to deliver both health and nutrition information to parents, and to teach them stimulation activities they can do with their children. This is a home-based programme which will work closely with health centres.

Dr. McDonald noted that, "at the policy level, there will be an effort for the different Ministries to work together on policies that affect children globally". For example, the Ministry of Labour might be encouraged to adopt a more responsive post-natal policy for mothers, or expand maternity leave. There are also plans to encourage workplace day care. The Ministry of Housing could develop a policy for new housing complexes to require facilities to meet early childhood needs.

It is hoped that there will be mobile units, based in the Early Childhood Resource Centre, to take parenting education into the communities, and to promote income-generating projects (such as a carpentry co-op that could produce educational materials, or a sewing co-op to make school uniforms).

The integrated approach will be supported by a community network, including the Basic School Association, Parish Boards and Zone Action Committees. It is hoped that the Basic School Association and the Day Care Association will hold joint meetings to address shared concerns.

The PROFILE Project provides the technical means for integrated monitoring of the situation of children and their educational environment. The information will be compiled from existing data systems in the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health. Once consolidated, the information will be given to the Planning Institute of Jamaica to serve as the basis of policy design.

Dr. McDonald also described "a very potent strategy" for community data collection and planning being used in the Philippines, called "the Minimum Basic Needs Approach". Community leaders collect information about their needs in relation to children regularly from every household in the community, using indicators developed by line Ministries and community representatives to cover everything that is absolutely essential for the well-being of children. Once collected, the information is represented schematically on maps of the community, so that the community can see where the needs are, prioritize problems and identify resources that can be used to solve them.

As the integrated approach is introduced in Jamaica, all channels of information dissemination, including parent education programmes and the mass media, will be used to stress the importance of early childhood education.

MOBILIZING SUPPORT
DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES WITH GOVERNMENT/NGO/COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Representatives of seven development agencies or banks active in the Caribbean region outlined the ways in which their agencies were currently involved in supporting early childhood education and development activities, and suggested possible options for the future. While UNESCO was unable to be represented in this session Mrs. Colleen Winter-Brathwaite, had earlier reminded participants in her remarks to the Opening Ceremony of "UNESCO's commitment to the provision of basic education" and in her opinion "no education can be more basic in the truest sense than early childhood education"

INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

Ms. Pamela Williams, Representative, Inter-American Development Bank, based in Barbados, began her presentation by apologizing for the fact that the IDB was not able to provide information specifically on support to early childhood development because these programmes are usually incorporated into larger social sector projects which have several components.

She explained, "During the past three years, IDB lending to the social sectors reached nearly US$9 billion, compared with US$21.5 billion of Bank financing for these sectors since the Bank's founding in 1959. In 1996, the Bank approved US$2.8 billion to finance 40 operations in the areas of health and sanitation, urban development, education, environment, micro-enterprise, and social investment funds in Latin America and the Caribbean. This significant increase in resources for social sector development reflects the Bank's commitment to dedicate 40 percent of its lending resources to the development of the social sectors."

In the education sector, she noted that there was a difference in project funding between those countries where primary enrolment is close to 100 percent and those where school coverage is still limited.

In the former, "financing tends to be devoted to renovation of infrastructure, development of curricula, improvement of teacher performance, and increasing the capacity to plan and manage education. These qualitative improvements are supported by improving pupil assessment techniques, teacher evaluation and community participation in the development of education. At the same time, attempts are made to create opportunity for the disadvantaged and those who may have missed out on education earlier in life."

In countries with limited education coverage, "Bank projects are placing more emphasis on expanding access to basic education, teacher training programmes, the procurement of basic educational materials, and fundamental reforms in school curricula, delivery systems, teacher incentives, and the balancing of the budget among the different levels of education."

In the future, IDB programmes will focus primarily on skills training, improvements to primary and secondary education, expansion of pre-school services, development of science and technology programmes, and broad education sector reform.

Ms. Williams described the various sources of IDB funding, including the ordinary capital resources fund, concessional funding for special operations in countries with the highest poverty indices, and the Multilateral Investment Fund, which provides grants for policy reforms, legislative change and human resource development.

She added that the Inter-American Institute for Social Development plays an important role in helping to develop institutional capacity for social policy formulation and social management.

Access to IDB funding for agencies in member countries is through governments, NGOs and community groups. Agencies in non-member countries can gain access to IDB funds through the Caribbean Development Bank.

CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

The Caribbean Development Bank was represented by Mr. Herman Grant, Chief Project Officer for Human Resources Development, who spoke during the Opening Ceremony of the Conference, and by Mr. Desmond Durant, Project Officer for Human Resources Development, who participated in the donor panel.

In his remarks, Mr. Grant explained that the Caribbean Development Bank has been paying more attention to human development, in which education takes pride of place. He noted that the Bank is looking at the challenges of the entire education sector.

He said, "We're trying to look at the financing of *relevant* education, meaning education which is rooted in our social condition, within this Caribbean region. We also need to look at the delivery in an efficient and cost-effective manner. We need to make sure that we are meeting our development objectives in the area of education. And, of course, when we look at education, we need to recognize the need to have equity, because within our systems there are people who are poor, who are destitute, who require access to education which normally would be the duty of government, but sometimes in cooperation with the private sector or development banks we could come up with a package that meets the needs of these people."

In his presentation, Mr. Durant reiterated that support to education and training was a relatively new area of focus for the CDB. "In its first 23 years of operation, CDB contributed US$46.8 million to the education sector, mainly through student loan schemes...about US$2.3 million per year. After 1993, however, ... we see a substantial increase in the resources of CDB going to human resource development projects. For the last three years, something like US$34.5 million were allocated to education and training, which amounted to about US$11.5 million per year."

CDB has provided assistance to basic education, continuing studies and distance education, teacher training, curriculum development, and materials provision. Mr. Durant noted that support provided to basic education has been at the primary level, and has not included pre-primary activities. However, grant money is also available through the Basic Needs Trust Fund for community activities in poor areas, which may include the establishment and operation of community day care centres or pre-schools. Further CDB support is provided to micro and small enterprises and, in this connection, there was interest on the part of CDB representatives throughout the Conference in the possibility of supporting local production of materials for early childhood education.

The CDB provides loans and grants to governments and the private sector, with direct assistance possible to micro and small enterprises.

CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Mrs. Phyllis Roett, Project Officer for CIDA at the Canadian High Commission in Barbados, described the ways in which CIDA assists education activities in the Caribbean.

CIDA is supporting a regional education reform project, with a budget of CDN$12 million, that deals with such matters as curriculum development. There is also a regional human resources development project, although that is more concerned with promoting economic competitiveness.

Perhaps the most useful funding source for agencies working in the field of early childhood education and development is the Canada Fund, which provides grants directly to more than 300 NGOs in the Eastern Caribbean from the High Commission in Barbados. Similar funds are operated by the other Canadian missions in the region. Although the total amount available for project support has declined in recent years, as part of the general reduction in budgets, the Canada Fund still provides resources for significant social projects.

As Mrs. Roett explained, "the Canada Fund spends almost half its allocation on pre-school, child care centres, adolescent centres, mother and child services..."

NGOs and community-based organizations can make submissions directly to the Canadian mission that is responsible for relations in their country. The Canada Fund cannot pay salaries, and projects supported must be sustainable, with additional sources of long-term support. Accurate costing and full project documentation must be provided, and applicants should be able to demonstrate a track record in the area in which they are requesting assistance.

UNITED STATES EMBASSY

Mr. Donald Holm, Deputy Chief of the United States Embassy in Barbados, described the support that the US government provides to the work of UNICEF, which represents the major way that funding is provided for social sector activities in the Caribbean region.

In 1996, the US government contributed US$100 million to UNICEF for general resources. The US government also has made substantial contributions to supplementary and emergency programmes.

The US National Committee for UNICEF also raises funds to support UNICEF programmes. In 1995, they raised US$13.8 million.

UNICEF

As one of the major sponsors of the Second Caribbean Conference on Early Childhood Education, UNICEF is already recognized as a major supporter of activity in this area throughout the Caribbean.

At the start of the Conference, Ms. Cassie Landers, a consultant with the Early Childhood Cluster at UNICEF Headquarters in New York, described the general basis for UNICEF's increasing interest, over the years, in early childhood development programmes. She outlined the programme approaches and strategies favoured by UNICEF, which include: educating caregivers, promoting community development, service delivery, strengthening national resources and capabilities, advocacy to strengthen demand and increase awareness, development of national child care and family policies, and development of supportive legal and regulatory frameworks.

Mr. Juan Carlos Espinola, Programme Coordinator in the UNICEF Caribbean Area Office in Barbados, presented the plans UNICEF has made for supporting early childhood development over the next five years. He explained that the programme he was describing applied to the area covered by the UNICEF Caribbean Area Office, which is responsible for programmes in 14 countries in the English-speaking Caribbean and Suriname. The Area Office is in Barbados, and there are sub-offices in Guyana and Jamaica, the latter of which will become a full country office as at 1 June 1997. The office

in Belize comes under the responsibility of the UNICEF office for Central America, in Guatemala. Other Caribbean countries — Cuba, Dominican Republic and Haiti — have their own independent UNICEF offices and individual programmes.

UNICEF CAO has allocated a total of US$1,650,000 from the general resources of UNICEF for early childhood development activities in the Eastern Caribbean. UNICEF will also be looking for an additional US$1,750,000 in supplementary funding from donor governments and UNICEF National Committees.

The Caribbean regional project will include support for policy development, curriculum development, teacher training, local materials production and technical assistance.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Ms. Ruth Houliston, Associate Economic Adviser in the European Community Delegation in Barbados, explained the ways in which the EC provides assistance in the Caribbean region.

The European Commission grants assistance to to countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific which are signatories of the Lomé Convention. There are two main mechanisms. The first, Programmable Aid provides support for national and regional indicative programmes.

In these programmes, human resources development is an important sector of activity, with approximately Barbados$30 million earmarked for human resources development in all project countries. This is focused on secondary and tertiary level education, language development, vocational and skills training, procurement of equipment and materials, support to community colleges and teacher training, and strategy and policy support.

There are no specific early childhood education activities included in the national or regional indicative programmes at this stage, but support is provided to education for mothers and children through the Mother and Child Health budget line in cooperation with the International Planned Parenthood Federation in London. Support is also provided for water supply programmes in rural communities.

The other funding mechanism is Non-Programmable Aid. This includes STABEX, an assistance programme for countries that suffer losses in primary export earning, and includes poverty alleviation, and support for diversification in agriculture and the wider economy.

NGO co-financing provides support to enable European NGOs and those in project countries to forge links through the implementation of development programmes.

Decentralized Cooperation provides direct assistance to local public authorities, grassroots organizations and NGOs.

CARICOM

On behalf of the Caribbean Community, Mrs. Myrna Bernard, Senior Project Officer for Education, explained that the CARICOM Secretariat was taking a greater role in helping to mobilize support for regional projects.

Although CARICOM had no projects of its own, as yet, in early childhood education, it was supporting various projects which could provide reinforcement to regional early childhood activities. These include a distance education programme for teachers (in a pilot phase), a gender awareness project for training institutions (just beginning), and the provision of model legislation to assist with legislative reform in several areas.

Mrs. Bernard noted that the CARICOM Secretariat would be interested in cooperating with governments, NGOs and the new Caribbean Association for Early Childhood Education and Development, especially for the development of early childhood education projects, "since we see this as one of the important areas... and one of the areas that has been neglected for too long now".

THE NEXT STAGE

Mrs. Grace MacCaskie-Wint, Co-ordinator of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution for Caribbean Association.

REGIONAL ASSOCIATION

A draft constitution for the Caribbean Association for Early Childhood Education and Development was considered by the participants at the Conference.

Participants adopted unanimously a resolution that approved in principle the establishment of the Association, with the following objectives:

1. Advancement of early childhood education and development throughout the Caribbean;
2. Setting up of a framework for the development of early childhood education and development programmes in the Caribbean;
3. Addressing of issues relating to early childhood education and development in the Caribbean in terms of policy, structures and implementation;
4. Facilitation of a system of networking early childhood education and development bodies, organisations and personnel regionally and internationally; and
5. Encouragement and facilitation of the formation of national organisations throughout the Caribbean.

A Steering Committee was appointed to continue the process of establishing the Association, which should be completed by the time of the Third Caribbean Conference in 1999. Participants were asked to take the draft constitution back to their national bodies for review and to send comments and suggestions for changes to the Steering Committee.

In her closing summary of the Conference, Chairperson Ms. Shelley Ashby commended participants for approving the establishment of the Caribbean Association, which will serve as an umbrella body for all early childhood education activities in the region.

Ms. Ashby also reported that the preparation of the directory of early childhood professionals, para-professionals and supporting agencies in the region was well under way.

PLAN OF ACTION

A significant product of the Second Caribbean Conference on Early Childhood Education was the approval of the Caribbean Plan of Action for Early Childhood Education, Care and Development for the period 1997 to 2002.

The Plan had been developed by a task force composed of regional experts, under the leadership of UNICEF, and it was reviewed, revised and finalized by a committee composed of those experts and the heads of all national delegations to the Conference, working outside the formal Conference sessions. The adoption of the Plan of Action was seen as a turning point for early childhood education and development in the region. Each element of the Plan is designed to be implemented in three phases.

The first phase will involve a number of organisational activities, and the development of planning processes in each country.

The second phase covers the improvement of existing services, the introduction of new service models and staff training.

The third phase will see the systematisation of services and measures to ensure sustainability through monitoring support, evaluation, and the establishment of training systems.

The Plan of Action focuses on the need for mechanisms and strategies to achieve:

- legislative framework for coordinated provision of services and monitoring standards in this sector;
- integrated social planning and implementation of initiatives;
- adequate financing
- equitable access to quality provisions to minimize the plight of the large percentage of children in high risk situations;
- education and training for all providers of early childhood education and development;
- appropriate curriculum development and materials development;
- increased parent, community and media awareness and involvement;
- coordinated action at both national and regional levels; and
- increased research to inform development of the sector.

The Plan of Action contains detailed descriptions of issues to be addressed, the current situation, constraints and opportunities, goals and targets, and recommendations for strategies and actions, and for the organisations that should take responsibility. The Plan of Action is intended as a general guideline. It will likely be revised and adapted in each country to meet local priorities, needs and circumstances. The length of

time taken for each phase in each component of the Plan will vary, depending on the amount of work that needs to be done.

Nevertheless, it is expected that the Plan of Action will be fully implemented in all countries of the region by the year 2002.

Dr. Kerida McDonald, one of the experts who worked on the preparation of the Plan of Action, explained that a glossary of terms would be included to ensure that all those using the Plan would have the same understanding of what is proposed.

She also explained the decision to define the age range covered by the plan as from birth to eight years. This is intended to ensure a smooth transition for children from pre-school to primary school, by promoting the carry-over of methods and approaches employed in day care and pre-school settings into the first years of primary school.

After some discussion, for clarification of terms used and the process to be followed, the Plan of Action was enthusiastically adopted by the participants in the Conference.

In her final remarks, Ms. Shelley Ashby said, "We must ensure that this Plan of Action becomes a reality. I am convinced that the goals and opportunities and suggestions so well detailed in the document will spur the powers that be into action. After this Conference, make every effort to ensure that these documents are effectively utilized by the relevant personnel, so as to improve early childhood programme and the quality of such in your regions."

A CONTINUING PROCESS

In her presentation, Mrs. Janet Brown had linked the work done at the Second Caribbean Conference on Early Childhood Education with the Caribbean Conference on the Rights of the Child in October 1996.

Mrs Myrna Bernard explained that the results of this Conference, including the Plan of Action, would be included in the deliberations of the special session of the CARICOM Standing Committee of Ministers of Education, which would meet in Barbados in May to plan for the special discussion of Human Resources Development that was on the agenda of the 18th meeting of Heads of Government, scheduled for July.

She said, "No regional action can be taken effectively without the agreement and support of individual governments" and she encouraged participants to undertake advocacy with their governments, when they returned home, for adoption and support of the Plan of Action, so that when the Ministers of Education arrive at the meeting of the Standing Committee, they will already have had a chance to review and understand the Plan.

Official Rapporteurs to the Conference.

She promised that CARICOM would ensure the early childhood education and development concerns were given prominent attention in the documentation prepared for discussions of Human Resources Development at the Heads of Government meeting.

IN CONCLUSION

Ms. Shelley Ashby, in her capacity as Chairperson of the Conference, summarized the results of the Second Caribbean Conference on Early Childhood Education. "After a week of intense discussion and workshops, we are pleased to state that we have achieved our major objectives."

Not only was the Conference able to produce a Regional Action Plan, which the Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, Barbados and Chairperson of the CARICOM Standing Committee of Ministers of Education, had earlier pledged to recommend to her regional colleagues, but also provided a valuable forum for hands-on training and professional upgrading of ECE practioners.

Delegates were able to derive practical applications at several levels throughout the Conference - from field visits to model Barbados centres for new ideas, and from workshops aimed at strengthening specific skills (e.g. the use of drama and music, or activities to develop children's social sills and self-esteem), from taking in the educational and commercial displays, to gaining a data gathering tool needed for planning, adapting a policy and programme development frame for addressing national priorities for early childhood provisions, or obtaining direction on investment financing.

Two other direct regional benefits emerged from the organization of the Conference. Press conferences were held daily with plenary presenters and workshop leaders which

highlighted the day's activities and themes. The print and electronic coverage of the Conference not only in Barbados but throughout the region via the Caribbean Broadcasting Union raised awareness of several issues of early childhood during the week and in special features after the Conference ended.

The mix of national delegations which comprised in the main, a senior government policy-maker, an early childhood training representative from a teacher's college or similar facility, a representative of any national organization or association for early childhood educators and a practioner representative, ensured that regional networking could take place at both policy and programmatic levels, and augured well for the continuing dialogue and action.

The final satisfaction seemed to be at the growing recognition within the region that early childhood educators and service providers are being taken more seriously as critical nation builders.

McGraw Hill Publishing Company and Days Book Store make a presentation to Ms Shelley Ashby, President.

APPENDICES

TOMORROW BEGINS TODAY

Appendix I

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY LILIAN G. KATZ, PH.D. AT THE OPENING CEREMONY ON APRIL 1, 1997

It is a special honor to participate in this second Caribbean Conference on Early Childhood Education. Though I have worked in eight of the Caribbean countries over the last two decades, clearly I know much less about the political and practical issues confronting the families and teachers who live and work in them. I want therefore to caution you that the ideas and observations I offer today are based on my own experience and study obtained largely in the U.S. I realize they may not fit very well with the traditions, constraints and contexts that influence your work. Therefore I leave it to you to judge their relevance to your own situations.

Having said that, however, I must add that extensive experience of working with our early childhood colleagues in many countries suggests that those who do the same kind of work across countries often understand each other better than do those within their own countries who occupy different roles within the field. It is likely, for example, that teachers of young children understand each other across our countries more easily—perhaps even better—than they understand or are understood by the officials who make policy within their own countries. In other words, the nature of our work, roles, and responsibilities may be a more powerful determinant of our assumptions, beliefs, and ideologies than are the larger national and political systems and cultural contexts in which that work is performed.

To turn to the theme of this conference: "Tomorrow Begins Today," I want to suggest five ways in which what we do with and for children today is related to all of their tomorrows.

1) The lasting Effects of Early Experience

First, the evidence is now virtually irrefutable that any provisions for young children—whether in the home or outside of it—that is less than top quality represents missed opportunities to make substantial contributions to the rest of their lives. Today, no one argues against that statement. Some may argue about what is meant by top quality; some argue about who is or should be responsible for the quality of provisions, and certainly many argue about how to fund them. But no one today with serious educational and social policy-making responsibility for a community or a country would now argue against the proposition that the experiences of the early years of life have a powerful influence on all later ones.

2) The Critical Period of Neurological Development

Second, we are meeting at a time of dramatic new research on the development of the neurological system, particularly the brain (Abbott, 1997; Sylwester, 1995). As Rutter & Rutter (1992) point out, "As early as six months, the brain has reached half its final mature weight...Indeed, the brain reaches 90 per cent of its final weight by the age of five...[and...is] most vulnerable to damage during this phase of rapid growth" (p. 37). Based on current research I think we can draw at least the following three implications:

(i) The new research on neurological development indicates that approximately 80%-85% of the neurological pathways a person ultimately acquires will develop during the first six years of life, and the rate of growth is steepest in the earliest of those years.

(ii) Inadequate, faulty, or damaged neurological systems are not spontaneously repaired or regenerated as easily as other kinds of body tissue; to the extent that repair or alternative neurological pathways can be developed, the capacity to do so diminishes after the early years.

(iii) The human brain is much more a pattern-seeking than pattern-receiving organ. Thus the early years should be marked by active exploration in rich and safe environments. In other words, good quality programs include frequent opportunity for children to interact with each other, with adults and with their environments in ways that will support their inborn quest for discerning cause-effect relations, the sequences of events, and other patterns around them.

3) All Children Have Lively Minds

Third, children come to our early childhood programs with different amounts of exposure to books, stories, being read to, holding and using pencils, having their questions answered, encouragement to read signs, and other kinds of experiences that help them adapt and adjust to school and the academic exercises so typical of the classroom. But all children come to school with lively minds, with the inborn disposition to make sense of their experience, of their observations, and of their feelings (See Katz, 1995, Ch. 3). In other words, just because children have not been exposed to knowledge and skills related to literacy and numeracy at home does not mean that they don't have lively minds or lack intelligence.

Young children compelled by circumstances to cope with **the risks** and vagaries of the streets or neighborhood often develop powerful intellectual capacities to predict, hypothesize, and analyze the contingencies they face. As long as children live in

a reasonably predictable environment marked by optimum (versus maximum or minimum) stimulation and challenge, their intelligence will grow. However, for children trying to grow in environments that are chaotic, unresponsive, excessively irrational, or unpredictable, the most adaptive response is to give up the natural pattern-seeking behavior. This research then reminds us again to resist the temptation to attribute low expectations to children who have not been exposed to early literacy and other school-related skills and knowledge.

I take this opportunity also to suggest that all of us keep in mind the distinction between academic and intellectual aspects of development and learning. Academic goals are served by presenting children with worksheets, drills, and other kinds of exercises designed to start them on basic literacy and numeracy skills. Academic tasks are small, disembedded items usually taught in isolation, requiring right answers, relying heavily on memory, the application of formulae (versus understanding), and the regurgitation of specific items learned from formal instruction. Furthermore, academic tasks are devoted to learning skills rather than to deepening understanding.

I do not wish to imply that academic tasks are never useful or appropriate. On the contrary, they have an important place in **education—as children grow older.** In other words, the inclusion of academic tasks in the curriculum is not merely an educational issue, it is a developmental issue in that we must ask: At what point in children's development are academic exercises most appropriate?

Intellectual goals and activities, on the other hand, are focused on the life of the mind in its fullest sense, including its aesthetic, moral and spiritual sensibilities. The formal definition of the term intellectual emphasizes reasoning, the processes of reflection, the development and analysis of ideas, and other creative uses of the mind.

The most important intellectual dispositions are inborn and must be strengthened and supported rather than undermined by premature academic pressures. The disposition to make sense of experience, for example, is inborn in all humans. Similarly, the dispositions to predict, analyze, synthesize, hypothesize, and to wonder, and so forth, are similarly inborn in all children. Young children are natural born scientists, anthropologists, and linguists. Indeed, toddlers are often so eager to test their hypotheses and predictions that without appropriate supervision they are likely to inflict serious bodily harm on themselves! Their endless disposition to explore their environments and everything in them frequently wears out their caretakers.

Again, if these dispositions are not supported, strengthened and appreciated, or are otherwise undermined, they are very difficult to replace later in life. Thus such dispositions merit concern when considering the long term consequences of their neglect rather than short term gains accrued by the academic experiences we provide to young children. As I have already suggested, just because young children don't have experiences at home that prepare them for the academic tasks of the school does not mean that they lack intellectual dispositions or abilities.

4) The Critical Period in Social Development

Evidence has been accumulating for more than twenty-five years—primarily in North America—that unless children achieve minimal social competence by about the age of six, plus or minus a half a year, the child is at risk for the rest of his or her life (See Katz & McClellan, in press). In this aspect of development, the critical period of the first six years is not due to any limitations of the brain and its development. Rather, it is because of what is known as the recursive cycle, namely, that whatever pattern of social behavior a child has, the chances are that others will react to the child so that the pattern will be strengthened. If a child is friendly and approachable, others will welcome his or her company, engage and interact with the child, from which the child will gain confidence as a social participant, and due to which opportunities to polish available skills and acquire new ones will increase. In this way a child who is easy to like becomes more likable—in a positive recursive cycle.

Similarly, a child who is difficult to approach or interact with is often avoided by others, which in turn limits his or her opportunities to acquire new skills, to polish and practice already available ones, and therefore the child becomes less likable. Similarly, children who are aggressive typically approach others so as to be rejected by them, and tend to return to and repeat the rejected behavior more intensely, and gradually become excluded from peer interaction and opportunities to improve their skills—in a negative cycle.

It is important to note then, that for likable and unlikable children, their approach to (or withdrawal from) others occurs in a recursive cycle that feeds on itself, and that the child (in the negative cycle) cannot break it by him or herself. Even adults with social difficulties cannot usually break a negative cycle without the help of very good friends or counselors, due mainly to the fact that social interaction is and should be largely spontaneous and unselfconscious behavior.

We now know a lot about how to help young children caught in a negative cycle. But we also know that help has to be offered early! A child of three- or four-years-old can be helped in a matter of weeks. But if we wait until a child is eight- or eleven-years-old or older, we will need the whole state mental health agency—and it still may be too late. By the time children reach the age of about ten, they have been accumulating so much first-hand evidence of their unlikability that it is hard for them to believe they could be liked by anyone whose acceptance and liking they would value. They are unlikely to attribute credibility to a counselor's or social worker's assertion that he or she "likes him," no matter how well meant.

There is also some reason to suspect that children who are rejected by their peers early and repeatedly eventually find each other, and that they get from each other a sense of belonging and intimacy based on their shared bitterness and hostility to the rest of the community (Dishion, et al. 1991). Such groups then have a deep and vested interest in avoiding positive relationships with the out-group; on the contrary, their deep feelings of belonging to their in-group are endangered by perceiving their adversaries in a positive light. As such, resolving conflicts threatens their sense of intimacy with the peers in their group. Such groups of disaffected youth are analogous to having time bombs in our own back gardens. The deep and intense emotions at work in these cases are most likely developed very early in life.

I have suggested that today we know more than ever before about how to help such children. What we know also is that teachers cannot help them unless the teacher/pupil ratio is low enough to permit frequent individualized interaction between children and adults, and close monitoring of social engagement in the classroom. Indeed, I would suggest that any teacher who works with children six-years-old or under should have at minimum, a full-time assistant—for this as well as other reasons. This appears to many to be an expensive proposal. But current evidence suggests that we all pay later for neglect of these problems in the early years; we pay not only in terms of the costs to communities of dealing with social dysfunction, but also in terms of the pain and suffering for all involved. Of course, small class size and good teacher/pupil ratios in and of themselves do not guarantee that teachers can help children overcome all social difficulties; but large class sizes virtually make it impossible to do so.

5) **Development and Cultural Identity**

Finally, tomorrow also springs from the seeds sewn today in terms of the early development of cultural identity—a sense of belonging to a community—one that is a source of values, norms, support, strength, inspiration, and pride. I note that the Draft Plan of Action presented at this conference is sensitive to this issue when it states clearly as a goal that programs "Ground public and parenting education in local cultures". This constitutes a real challenge in all our countries, and for many reasons. It is a complex matter not simply of good will or of teaching and learning about foods, festivals and fashions.

We have to bear in mind that cultures constantly change; they always have done, and always will. Often the changes cause internal within-culture contradictions. Note also that the sages of the ages have always complained about the behavior of the youth, about their disrespect for their elders, and claimed that the young do with impunity what they themselves never did at that age. The fact that this lament goes back more than two thousand years suggests that it may be true: that for each generation, the range of permissible behavior steadily widens—for better or worse!

Furthermore, it is a good idea to remember that culture is largely about things we are not aware of until somebody or something violates them. We have to bear in mind also, that just because people belong to the same culture does not mean they all agree with each other about how best to raise or to teach children. Indeed, level of income may be a more powerful determinant of child rearing practices than ethnic or cultural group. I sometimes wonder whether parenting practices are more similar among the wealthy across cultures than between wealthy and poor within cultures. In other words, affluence, within and across cultures, presents opportunities and risks in every culture. Similarly, poverty may impact on parenting more negatively in some environments-for example, in big cities—than in small country villages.

When we speak of helping parents with their parenting skills, and when we offer parent-education programs, are we tampering with their cultures? When are we and when aren't we? These are very difficult issues that we are only just beginning to examine carefully and reasonably rather than emotionally. All of us still have much to learn about this important aspect of development and learning from each other as well as from those families we are trying to serve.

Conclusion

During my experience of working with our colleagues in India earlier this year, I was struck by the frequency with which they dwelt on the subject of what they would do, could do, wish they could do, if only they had more funds, better space, more materials, well trained staff, and other much needed and highly desirable resources. It is quite easy to fall into this mode of thinking, and certainly very understandable. However, I want to assure you that I have seen and worked in early childhood settings in many places in which ten times, or maybe twenty or thirty times more is spent on facilities, materials, and personnel than is typical throughout the Caribbean, but in which—sad to say-children's minds are being wasted, in which children are engaged in trivial and frivolous activities and premature preparation for examinations many tomorrows away, in which children's minds are not any more engaged or enriched than many of you achieve here in Caribbean under less than ideal conditions.

I have worked with teachers in cities like Chicago, Milwaukee, Washington, D.C., and others in which teachers are unable to take their children outside of the school to explore the neighborhood because the school is the only safe building in it! Similarly, many teachers in such environments in a rich country like the US cannot engage their children in close study of their natural environment, not only because of the dangers in the streets, but because nothing now grows in the neighborhood.

Thus the challenge for many teachers in many countries, both rich and poor, is to work in less than ideal conditions and yet to

engage their youngsters in experiences worthy of their lively growing minds and their developing sensibilities.

So—if tomorrow begins today—what should we be doing today? I want to close with an idea that comes from "perturbation theory", and it goes like this: imagine if you will, a cyclist riding along a road without difficulty. Suddenly, the front wheel hits a very small pebble and the bicycle is thrown off course. The rider falls, is injured, the result of which is that her whole life changes for ever. In other words, perturbation theory suggests that even apparently very small items and events can have huge and lasting consequences. What we are asking for and planning for in this conference and with the creation of the new Caribbean Association for Early Childhood Education and Development are huge and lasting consequences for all the tomorrows for which we are responsible.

Is there an equivalent or a parallel with the pebble that we can put in place now, today, that will ultimately have the large and lasting consequences we hope for?

I suggest the best way to ensure good education and development for all the tomorrows is by focusing our collective and individual energies on the quality of the day-to-day interactions we have with children so that those interactions are as rich, interesting, engaging, satisfying, and meaningful as we can make them. For teachers, I suggest: don't drain your energy on blaming conditions, politicians, or officials, or the parents, and anyone or anything else. Save your energy for your relationships with the children. For those outside the classroom I suggest focusing on ways to support teachers in every possible way so that their energy and skills are not diverted from the essential matter of the daily lives they lead with children.

As said at the first Caribbean Conference on Early Childhood Education in St. Thomas, V. I. in 1994, I really believe each of us must come to care about everyone else's children. We must come to see that the well-being of our own children can only be secured when the well being of all other peoples children is also secure. After all, when one of our own children needs life-saving surgery, someone else's child will perform it; when one of our own children is harmed by violence in the streets, someone else's child will commit it. But to care about others' children not just a practical matter: it is also the right thing to do!

Remember that whoever might be the leaders, the Prime Ministers, and Heads of these islands, nations, and territories thirty or forty years from now are very likely in someone's early childhood program today, and I hope these girls are having good experiences! We are with the children for a very short time during a very important time in their lives. Let's make it count by giving it all we've got.

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Appendix II

CARIBBEAN PLAN OF ACTION

FOR

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, CARE AND DEVELOPMENT

1997-2002

ADOPTED BY:

THE SECOND CARIBBEAN CONFERENCE

ON

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

AT

DOVER CONVENTION CENTRE, CHRIST CHURCH, BARBADOS

APRIL 1-5, 1997

PREAMBLE

The Delegates

Attending the Second Caribbean Conference on Early Childhood Education held at Dover Convention Centre, Christ Church, Barbados on April 1-5, 1997;

Representing as professionals the Caribbean countries of Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Cuba, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, The Netherlands Antilles, Trinidad and Tobago, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands;

Aiming to set a framework for the development of early childhood education programmes in the Caribbean and to initiate a plan of action to guide this development;

Recognising that the Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified by all Governments in the region;

Desiring to take forward the Belize Commitment to Action for the Rights of the Child;

Noting also the request by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) for an input into the Heads of Government Meeting scheduled for May 1997 with a special focus on Human Resource Development in the Caribbean;

Having considered the situation of early childhood care and development in the Caribbean;

Agree to adopt the attached Plan of Action for Early Childhood Education, Care and Development in the Caribbean, 1997-2002

ECED PLAN OF ACTION 1997-2002

Introduction

Early Childhood, is the formative stage of development spanning the period from birth through to eight years. This period is recognized as the time when young children need security, safety, good nutrition and exposure to concrete and varied learning experiences. These together will foster their healthy development as independent thinkers, enthusiastic learners and socially responsible citizens. Defining this age-range for early childhood will facilitate the development of policies and programmes to promote smooth transition and continuation of fundamental and developmentally appropriate practices at home, in pre-primary settings, and within early primary schooling. Appropriate Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) philosophy, policies, and practices must be informed by scientific evidence and concerns for social justice, and be in tune with national priorities, cultural realities and parental expectations.

In the Caribbean, there has been widespread recognition that as we face the challenges of the new century, with the development imperatives dictated by the global economy, the quality of human resources will be the most critical factor in achieving and maintaining a high level of competitiveness. Research evidence has indicated the crucial importance of Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) to the success of any initiative in human resource development. It is clear that the responsibility for ECED extends far beyond the boundaries of Ministries of Education. The current situation in the region, however, is that this has been a neglected area, especially in terms of policy direction, administrative coordination and concrete programmes which take into account the importance of integrated provision of services for the sector. Perusal of allocations by Governments and others in this area indicates inequities of provisions within and across sectors which are not commensurate with their recognized importance and need.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified by all governments in the region and further commitment has been signaled by the signing of the Belize Commitment. The Caribbean Regional Policy, "The Future of Education in the Caribbean", endorsed by Ministers of Education in 1993, has set out among its policy goals the improvement of the quality of Early Childhood Education, and the CARICOM Standing Committee of Ministers of Education in 1995 gave further priority to this area of provision.

The emerging interest in ECED and the political will of governments to address this sector in a coordinated manner, as indicated by the ratification and endorsement of relevant documents, was noted by the Second Caribbean Conference on Early Childhood Education, Barbados, April, 1997, which brought together three hundred professionals in this area from across the region. As a result, one important outcome of the Conference has been the delineation of an Action Plan to address the implementation of initiatives pertinent to issues identified and mandated by Governments in the region.

The Plan of Action focuses on the need for mechanisms and strategies to achieve:

- Legislative framework for coordinated provision of services and monitoring standards in this sector;
- Integrated social planning and implementation of initiatives;
- Adequate financing;
- Equitable access to quality provisions to minimize the plight of the large percentage of children in high risk situations;
- Education and training for all providers of ECED;
- Appropriate Curriculum Development and materials development;
- Increased parent, community and media awareness and involvement;
- Coordinated action at both national and regional levels; and
- Increased research to inform development of the sector, detailed as follows:

1. **LEGISLATE for services to children from birth to school entry, within national legislation for child as a legal entity**

ISSUE	BASIS FOR ACTION		RECOMMENDED ACTION	
	Current situation, Constraints/Opportunities (CS) (C) (O)	Goals/targets	Strategies/Actions (and timing in *phases)*	Responsibility (Nat, Reg, Intl.)
Legislative framework for services to children from birth to school en-	CS: Lack of child legal status definition and coordinated legislative framework within which to devise policy and enforcement procedures. C: Fragmentation and absence of child issues in range of laws frustrate national capacity to ensure child protection and to make coordinated and effective interventions in policy and practice to promote child well being from birth.	DRAFT legislation for the legal status of the child in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. (A Children's Act)	ENSURE inter-ministerial development and mainstreaming of child related policies and direction in services for the child from birth to school entry to contribute to the legislative frame (*Phase 1*)	Government with external support for development of regional frame
	O: CRC goals, Santiago Accord and Belize Commitment, empower Governments to legislate for child from birth and to: • define the child as a legal entity • promote the well-being of the child • establish inter-disciplinary and inter-agency collaboration in the interests of the child • ensure that the wishes, rights and interests of the child are ascertained in decision making • safeguard and protect the interests of the child • define parental responsibility in relation to the	Development of a sound policy for investment in ECED in each country including the construction of local processes for implementation of legislative requirements	LEAD national consultation on proposed legal frame and ECED service development within it (*Phase 1*) PROVIDE guidance for local	Government with technical assistance as needed Government. All national sectors to participate in process of maximising response. (Private, NGO, CBO, agencies in

1. (continued)
LEGISLATE for services to children from birth to school entry, within national legislation for child as a legal entity

ISSUE	BASIS FOR ACTION		RECOMMENDED ACTION	
	Current situation, Constraints/Opportunities (CS) (C) (O)	Goals/targets	Strategies/Actions (and timing in *phases*)	Responsibility (Nat, Reg, Intl.)
	O: (continued) • devise a partnership between the parent and the State to promote and support the needs and protect interests of the child • develop comprehensive and coordinated facilities and services in cooperation and in conjunction with voluntary and private sectors for the care and development of the child from birth to school entry • establish a Child Protection Register and organised institutional system for the treatment and management of child abuse • establish legislative links with other laws affecting the capacity of the parent and the State to promote the well-being, and safeguard the interests, of the child (including employment legislation, and legislation affecting the status of women)		ESTABLISH timetable for phased implementation of legislative requirements, commencing with priorities for children in need and the proposed "route" to universalisation of ECED services (*Phase 2*) SYSTEMATISE statutory review mechanisms for enforcement (*Phase 3*)	Government, with technical assistance as requested
	CS: Lack of common definition of levels and types, within the system of provisions and lack of continuity for children passing from home, through day care, preschool and primary school.	Develop ECED policy defining the intended beneficiaries for each pre-primary level and setting, and rationalizing the system of provisions for children **from birth to 8 years** inclusive of training, curriculum, standards, monitoring and evaluation	PROMOTE regional cooperation (*Phase 3*) for the development and implementation of policies and programmes in ECED	

2. ENTITLE the child from birth to school entry living in at risk situations to targeted resources

ISSUE	BASIS FOR ACTION		RECOMMENDED ACTION	
	Current situation, Constraints/Opportunities (CS) (C) (O)	Goals/targets	Strategies/Actions (and timing in *phases)*	Responsibility (Nat, Reg, Intl.)
Planning capacity for social and human development in support of the child from birth to school entry living in at risk situations	C: Children and systems are disadvantaged by dissonance between ECED settings and formalized academic primary settings. Fragmented and overlapping services for children at pre-primary level, resulting in duplication of efforts and inefficiencies.	(As above)	(As above)	(As above)
	CS: conditions of poverty which overwhelm both the capacities of social institutions and those of individuals to construct routes out, and frustrate attempts to find sustainable models and solutions for young children	DRAW a country poverty map to include data and indicators on young children	IDENTIFY indicators of impact of poverty on child (*Phase 1*); and	Government, with technical assistance as needed
	C: existing planning capacity may not identify geographical maps of greatest need (particularly where affected by fear of violence) and within areas identified, specifically: • young children in need of support • parents of young children in need of individual and social support, training and work opportunities • potential for social organisation to construct services and support for young children • existing social institutions best positioned to take ECED initiatives forward (CBOs, NGOs, churches) • health and income indicators		CONSTRUCT within a social monitoring system a process of data assembly from poverty indicators affecting young child (*Phase 1*) CONTINUE planning in support of young child in selected priority areas (*Phase 1*) and INITIATE planning for targeted areas on poverty map, generating collaborative alliances as needed (*Phase 2*)	Government with technical assistance as needed Government in collaboration with NGOs and CBOs, with donor, IFI and private sector support

2. **(continued)**
ENTITLE the child from birth to school entry living in at risk situations to targeted resources

ISSUE	BASIS FOR ACTION		RECOMMENDED ACTION	
	Current situation, Constraints/Opportunities (CS) (C) (O)	Goals/targets	Strategies/Actions (and timing in *phases)*	Responsibility (Nat, Reg, Intl.)
Investment in community infrastructure in support of the child from birth to school entry living in at risk conditions and poverty	O: Government policies in poverty eradication, and goals of UN commitments (which converge in relation to women and children in poverty) create a climate for investment by donor agencies and IFIs in partnership with governments and national private sector interests on specific programmes for children from birth to school entry CS: access to safe water and the provision of safe shelter are basic necessities for newborn babies and very young children; also support for community child care solutions to assist ECED are essential for young children in pre-school years. Coverage in poor areas is patchy, insecure and inequitable. C/O: as above	DEVISE data systems to support planning for the young child in at risk situations within the overall planning for social and human development DELIVER safe water and shelter for families with very young children in poor areas	IMPLEMENT data collection and analysis on systematic basis on status of young child in poverty *(Phase 2)* and MAINTAIN system on ongoing basis to lead programme planning *(Phase 3)* TARGET priority areas for intervention to provide safe water and shelter for very young children *(Phase 1)* and ESTABLISH programme of intervention with community participation in areas identified on poverty map *(Phase 2)*	Government with support to end of *Phase 2* if needed from donor sources Government with private sector and housing trusts in programme of cooperation in planning, construction and fostering community participation

2. **(continued)**

ENTITLE the child from birth to school entry living in at risk situations to targeted resources

ISSUE	BASIS FOR ACTION		RECOMMENDED ACTION	
	Current situation, Constraints/Opportunities (CS) (C) (O)	Goals/targets	Strategies/Actions (and timing in *phases*)	Responsibility (Nat, Reg, Intl.)
			SUSTAIN improvements through monitoring, repair and maintenance programme (*Phase 3*)	Government
		DEVELOP community infrastructures and support systems for ECED services	GENERATE interest and demand in a few priority areas for pilot interventions in ECED services (*Phase 1*) and BUILD ON existing community infrastructures where they exist and/or IDENTIFY LEADERSHIP potential to create infrastructures needed for ECED service delivery (*Phase 2*)	Government with NGOs and CBOs, and seeking private sector or social investment programme support to fund ECED services established
			FORM community networks and organisations to sustain community solutions to child care needs and IMPLEMENT programme of support to ECED programme delivery (*Phase 3*)	Government with NGOs and CBOs with ongoing investment support

3.

GROUND public and parenting education and children's programmes, in local cultures

ISSUE	BASIS FOR ACTION		RECOMMENDED ACTION	
	Current situation, Constraints/Opportunities (CS) (C) (O)	Goals/targets	Strategies/Actions (and timing in *phases)*	Responsibility (Nat, Reg, Intl.)
Sensitisation of policy makers and public to specific conditions in which children from birth to school age are raised	CS: incomplete pictures/understandings may exist amongst policy makers and public of conditions in which children are born and raised including: • explanations for early parenthood in teenage years • rationale for differential raising of boys and girls • effects of child shifting patterns • appreciation of value of child care supports such as parent support groups and day care •understanding of beneficial parenting practices, particularly those which encourage the child's development, self expression and capacities for conflict resolution C: contradictions and confusions are shaping children's lives. Education alone cannot bring change without social, human and economic development interventions in support of life alternatives. Negative forces from wider economic and social spheres undermine parental authority and children's self-concept thus eroding the basis for beneficial child rearing O: regional and national research findings, growth of local media broadcasting, long established tradition of radio listening, availability of regional practice examples and participatory planning expertise can all assist country based innovations	DESIGNATE lead agency for taking forward sensitisation role	IDENTIFY potential in governmental and/or NGO sector for leading the ECED sensitisation process *(Phase 1)* CREATE advocacy tools with rationale for ECED embedded in local conditions, with practice examples *(Phase 1)* IMPLEMENT programme of sensitisation of policy makers and public across all sectors *(Phase 2)* ESTABLISH structure for ongoing advice and advocacy to government for ECED policy and programme development *(Phase 3)*	Government Government and/ or delegated NGO Lead agency with others in a "Task Force" framework Lead agency to ensure participation of private sector, other social partners governmental, donor and NGO policy makers and research assistance

3. **(continued)**

GROUND public and parenting education and children's programmes, in local cultures

ISSUE	BASIS FOR ACTION		RECOMMENDED ACTION	
	Current situation, Constraints/Opportunities (CS) (C) (O)	Goals/targets	Strategies/Actions (and timing in *phases*)	Responsibility (Nat. Reg. Intl.)
Identification of key areas for public and parent education	CS, C and O (as above)	CREATE an informed public through a concerted campaign strategy at all levels for ECED programmes		Government
			ESTABLISH high profile and influential leadership for public education in ECED (*Phase 1*)	Government or delegated to NGO or specialist statutory agency
			ARTICULATE value of ECED programmes in local contexts to motivate demand (*Phase 2*)	
			TARGET provision of parenting support materials and initiation of support groups for families, and PROMOTE positive and attractive activities and alternative role models for young males in support of ECED (*Phase 2*)	Lead agency
			EVALUATE strategies and chart future activities based on outcomes and lessons learned (*Phase 3*)	Government with lead agency

3. GROUND public and parenting education and children's programmes, in local cultures

ISSUE	BASIS FOR ACTION		RECOMMENDED ACTION	
	Current situation, Constraints/Opportunities (CS) (C) (O)	Goals/targets	Strategies/Actions (and timing in *phases)*	Responsibility (Nat, Reg, Intl.)
Development of a responsive and responsible media sensitised to the goals for young children	CS, C and O (as above)	OPEN dialogue with the media on their role in nation building starting with children from birth to school entry	DEVELOP standards in print and broadcasting media which reflect ECED policy and legislation (*Phase 2*) PROMOTE the rights and interests of young children in dedicated programme content (*Phase 2*) PROVIDE clear guidance to parents on anticipated impact of adult content, and other inappropriate content, particularly violence, on young children (*Phase 2*) Promote airing and development of culturally appropriate and sustainable Caribbean produced programmes. (Phase 2)	Government and media with ECED groups Media with UNICEF and ECED groups Government media and ECED groups with research assistance

4. EDUCATE for parenthood before adulthood

ISSUE	BASIS FOR ACTION		RECOMMENDED ACTION	
	Current situation, Constraints/Opportunities (CS) (C) (O)	Goals/targets	Strategies/Actions (and timing in *phases*)	Responsibility (Nat, Reg, Intl.)
Coordination of support to agencies providing parenting education and education in early child development	CS: parenting education and learning about child development are often not accessible at a young enough age to affect behaviour. C: deficiency of approaches in secondary school and reluctance at the primary level to deliver parenting education despite widespread concern with immaturity of and lack of support for young adolescent parents O: Existence of the HFLE (CARICOM/UN agencies) Caribbean Strategy initiated in primary and secondary schools in the region. Experience of "child to child" learning techniques serves as a potential model for encouraging sibling responsibility and early learning about child development	DISSEMINATE critical parenting and ECED knowledge to impact on behaviour of young persons	IDENTIFY popular education methodologies for use with school age and out of school children in formal and informal settings with accompanying training programmes. (*Phase 1*) DEVISE persuasive and cost effective programmes to be piloted in a range of schools and youth settings (*Phase 2*) EVALUATE effectiveness of strategy and INCORPORATE learning methodologies into school development planning and community development programmes (*Phase 3*)	Government, Ministry of Health/ Education, Social Affairs or Welfare and/or to NGO or specialist lead agency Community groups

5. SUPPORT the parent and the child in the year after a child's birth

ISSUE	BASIS FOR ACTION		RECOMMENDED ACTION	
	Current situation, Constraints/Opportunities (CS) (C) (O)	Goals/targets	Strategies/Actions (and timing in *phases*)	Responsibility (Nat, Reg, Intl.)
Provision of sufficient time for breast-feeding and parental bonding	CS: Babies are not obtaining the full value of micronutrients in breastmilk over the period in which they would derive maximum benefit. Neither mother nor baby is being supported in process to develop interaction which stimulates brain, language, social and emotional development in the child C: negative climate because of social and economic pressure on mother weakens public education strategies on the value of breast-feeding. Mothers cannot afford to listen. Inflexible working and leave arrangements prohibit change. Access to ECED information and services is patchy compared to access to child health O: access by policy-makers to the information and research on critical need for early interventions, particularly to support children born in poverty, which demonstrate unequivocally the positive effect of interventions in the first year of life. Cost effective models of home visiting when combined with high quality child care support have proved to be effective in parent education programmes	Encourage governments to create provision for the extension of the time available for breast-feeding and parental bonding. PROMOTE awareness of value of breast-feeding for child and mother child relationship	CAMPAIGN consistently over a long period of time on the value of breast-feeding and bonding. (*Phase 1*) DEVELOP models of flexible working/leave/home tasks and workplace child care with selected employers to test cost benefit to all parties (*Phase 2*) CONSTRUCT joint support arrangements for leave and flexible working to enable opportunity to breast-feed and bond and ARRANGE flexible work patterns and partner leave policies during the child's first year (*Phase 3*)	Government or delegated to lead agency Lead agency Government, with private and public sectors Government, with private and public sectors, including labour organizations

5. (continued)

SUPPORT the parent and the child in the year after a child's birth

ISSUE	BASIS FOR ACTION		RECOMMENDED ACTION	
	Current situation, Constraints/Opportunities (CS) (C) (O)	Goals/targets	Strategies/Actions (and timing in *phases)*	Responsibility (Nat, Reg, Intl.)
Accessibility of ECED knowledge to parents	CS, C and O (as above)	BUILD on existing delivery of child health services to families to incorporate ECED	REFOCUS existing child health services to provide ECED advice and practical parenting education (*Phase 1*)	Relevant Ministries Relevant Ministries with support from ECED practitioners
			IDENTIFY parents of new borns in poverty or at risk children, in need of health and ECED support and knowledge (*Phase 2*)	Relevant Ministries Relevant Ministries with NGOs and CBOs in areas selected
			TRAIN home visiting teams (*Phase 2*) to pilot an integrated child development and parenting education approach in a few priority communities	Relevant Ministries with agencies and ECED practitioners involved
			EVALUATE impact on child development in areas selected and PHASE-IN wider programme with administrative capacity in place (*Phase 3*)	

6. DEVELOP the child within the family in the years before preschool

ISSUE	BASIS FOR ACTION		RECOMMENDED ACTION	
	Current situation, Constraints/Opportunities (CS) (C) (O)	Goals/targets	Strategies/Actions (and timing in *phases*)	Responsibility (Nat, Reg, Intl.)
Effectiveness of outreach and scope of child health and development programmes with parent education	CS: difficulty in sustaining coverage of child health services after first year of child's life and before child 're-emerges' in pre or primary school. Children who are in day care of variable quality, and those at home in poor socio economic conditions may be at risk of developmental delay. C: development of formal programmes in child care centres and professional interventions are expensive, not always effective, culturally relevant or sensitive to family needs. Parents are unaware or lack confidence in their role as educators. O: development of informal models of parent education combined with community early childhood centres, flexible access arrangements and active parent participation can be more effective than formal service delivery. Programmes which combine education and care services as a minimum requirement have a greater chance of achieving quality and effectiveness for development of poorest and at risk children	IMPROVE access to and increase coverage of ECED services. DEVELOP networks of support amongst parents in need.	GENERATE links between parents and existing ECED services (*Phase 1*) SUPPORT quality improvement activities by monitoring and advising on service delivery (*Phase 2*) EQUIP parents with complementary materials for home based support of child development (*Phase 2*) TARGET parents in need and ASSIST development of support groups to share experiences, generate ideas and activities, build self-esteem and support children's early learning. (*Phase 1*) DEVELOP understanding amongst parents as first educators. (*Phase 2*)	Community based ECED services in NGOs, and CBOs with support from designated government departments(s) NGOs, CBOs, religious organizations, community agencies

6. **(continued)**

DEVELOP the child within the family in the years before pre-school

ISSUE	BASIS FOR ACTION		RECOMMENDED ACTION	
	Current situation, Constraints/Opportunities (CS) (C) (O)	Goals/targets	Strategies/Actions (and timing in *phases*)	Responsibility (Nat, Reg, Intl.)
			ADDRESS the processes (*Phase 2*) of gender socialisation in the family and community, and devise appropriate materials and interventions to assist parents to make progress towards equity	NGOs and CBOs with ECED research assistance
			ESTABLISH network of parent volunteers for training in key areas of child development and parenting education (beneficial nutrition 'menus', psychosocial development, language and stimulation) to SUSTAIN the support networks (*Phase 3*)	Relevant Ministries, in support of NGOs and CBOs and other community agencies
Availability of early childhood centres	CS, C and O (as above)	INITIATE AND ENHANCE the development of early childhood centres		Government
			IDENTIFY high quality child care centres in operation (in day care or alternatives) and determine local elements which produce the high quality (*Phase 1*)	Delegate to NGO or specialist lead agency

6. (continued)

DEVELOP the child within the family in the years before pre-school

ISSUE	BASIS FOR ACTION		RECOMMENDED ACTION	
	Current situation, Constraints/Opportunities (CS) (C) (O)	Goals/targets	Strategies/Actions (and timing in *phases)*	Responsibility (Nat, Reg, Intl.)
			DEVELOP cost effective early childhood centre models to sustain high quality, adapted to the needs of a few poorest communities (*Phase 2*)	As delegated
			EVALUATE effectiveness and sustainability of models, and their flexibility to local conditions (*Phase 2*)	Government and lead agency as delegated. Government, lead Ministries with donor and private sector assistance
			TAKE INCREMENTAL approach to phasing-in improvements or new centres, starting with poor areas, and ensuring administrative capacity is in place for process of licensing and registration (*Phase 2*)	
			PLAN development of centres on a universal basis for those in need (prioritising children with disabilities and children of working parent(s) on low incomes) (*Phase 3*)	Government, lead Ministries with donor and private sector assistance

7. PROMOTE the child's learning and development in all pre-school settings

ISSUE	BASIS FOR ACTION		RECOMMENDED ACTION	
	Current situation, Constraints/Opportunities (CS) (C) (O)	Goals/targets	Strategies/Actions (and timing in *phases*)	Responsibility (Nat, Reg, Intl.)
Understanding of service providers on how young children learn	CS: effectiveness of provision as measured by developmental outcomes for individual children on school entry is a major concern across the region. Concern with the quality of what is provided indicates variable understandings of how children learn best and how service providers can create the necessary conditions for achievement and socialization. C: existing programmes have responded to the need for high coverage at the expense of quality, responding to socio economic pressures on families with young children. Lack of material resources, consistent ongoing human resource development and coherent ECED policy frameworks have not assisted innovation or quality. O: regional picture reflects the worldwide one. Research and practice examples provide clarity on the way forward: ECED programmes need to start where the child is (culture and context), promote continuity with prior learning, ensure active participation of parent(s) as primary educator(s), prioritise language, thought and psychosocial development, and assist the child's learning continuum into formal schooling.	PROVIDE clear pedagogical guidance for quality in pre-school settings	IDENTIFY practitioners in ECED and provide them with technical assistance to produce country based pedagogical guidelines (*Phase 1*) ASSIST service providers to hold Quality Workshops with parents to produce Quality indicators for ECED services (*Phase 2*) ESTABLISH high quality in-service training including on-site training for competencies and accreditation for ECED service providers (*Phase 2*) INSTITUTE lay inspection and advisory support teams to provide feedback to service providers and government on all aspects of development towards quality (*Phase 3*)	Government, (lead Ministry) with University and teacher college involvement, NGOs and relevant ministries. Regional bodies in corporate efforts to develop ECED programmes.

7. **(continued)**
PROMOTE the child's learning and development in community pre-school settings

ISSUE	BASIS FOR ACTION		RECOMMENDED ACTION	
	Current situation, Constraints/Opportunities (CS) (C) (O)	Goals/targets	Strategies/Actions (and timing in *phases)*	Responsibility (Nat, Reg, Intl.)
Sustaining and extending curricula reform to embrace child focused methodologies practice	CS, C and O (as above)	SUPPORT process of developing child centered curricula with practical support tools and materials.	CONSULT with practitioners as to the obstacles in physical structures, training, support, or material resources to the implementing of child centered methodologies (*Phase 1*) DEFINE principles of child initiated learning in terms of child to child and child to adult interaction, and the programme implications of implementation (*Phase 1*)	Government, Ministry of Education and ECED specialist support. NGOs micro-enterprises, IFI's, CARICOM.
Organisation, structures and learning materials in pre-school settings	CS: pre-primary settings across the region have limited supply of play/learning materials. C: Without adequate and appropriate materials ECED personnel even if adequately trained are unable to facilitate sustainable child centered and culturally relevant learning experiences for children. O: Availability of creating culturally appropriate relevant resources. availability of creative and technical expertise in the region	DEVISE model for sustainable production of culturally adequate and appropriate learning materials.	DEVISE strategy for a) curriculum development; b) materials development and production, based on outcome of consultation, and early learning principles (*Phase 1*) INTEGRATE psychosocial aspects in the development of instructional materials and resources (*Phase 2*)	

7. **(continued)**

PROMOTE the child's learning and development in community pre-school settings

ISSUE	BASIS FOR ACTION		RECOMMENDED ACTION	
	Current situation, Constraints/Opportunities (CS) (C) (O)	Goals/targets	Strategies/Actions (and timing in *phases*)	Responsibility (Nat, Reg, Intl.)
Organisation, structures and learning materials in pre-school settings (cont.)	CS, C and O: (as above)	REFOCUS pre-school settings to be developmentally and culturally appropriate	AUDIT needs of pre-school settings for physical changes to provide flexible 'spaces' for child centered learning (*Phase 1*)	Government, Ministry of Education and ECED specialist support
			INITIATE informed programme of equipment construction, include outdoor and indoor equipment (*Phase 1*)	Involve NGOs and CBOs and providers
			PROMOTE learning atmospheres allowing children flexible and varied use of activities, to learn at their own pace and make their own choices (*Phase 2*)	
			PROVIDE opportunities for children to learn social responsibility through problem solving and negotiated rules (*Phase 2*)	
			ENSURE adult-child ratios to support child development (*Phase 2*)	

7. **(continued)**

PROMOTE the child's learning and development in community pre-school settings

ISSUE	BASIS FOR ACTION		RECOMMENDED ACTION	
	Current situation, Constraints/Opportunities (CS) (C) (O)	Goals/targets	Strategies/Actions (and timing in *phases)*	Responsibility (Nat, Reg, Intl.)
Forging partnerships with parents pre-school and wider community	CS, C and O (as above)	ESTABLISH principle of partnership among ECED provider parent and community	CONSTRUCT effective communication processes in consultation with parents individually and collectively, taking into account economic and times constraints, providers, parents and communities. *(Phase 1)* DEVELOP programmes to support home based learning activities. *(Phase 2)* REVIEW development of each child with the parent(s) and devise joint plans for interventions for the child which reflect family needs and expectations *(Phase 2)*	Government, Ministry of Education and ECED providers and relevant CBOs

8. IMPLEMENT integrated approaches for ECED for children from birth to school entry

ISSUE	BASIS FOR ACTION		RECOMMENDED ACTION	
	Current situation, Constraints/Opportunities (CS) (C) (O)	Goals/targets	Strategies/Actions (and timing in *phases*)	Responsibility (Nat, Reg, Intl.)
Need for increased access to integrated services and support for the benefit of the young child	CS: parent access to services, information and advice is limited and variable. C: Lack of equity in resource distribution, and insufficient attention for targetting the poorest and children at risk . Fragmentation and duplication of service delivery systems. Lack of cooperation, coordination and convergence between government programmes. Lack of integrated approaches at management level. O: Practical experience has demonstrated the power and effectiveness of integration within a single ministry where there is designated (additional) capacity and strong political support. Different approaches include cooperation between agencies and government, coordination of services and supports at local level, and convergence of responsibilities under single management.. Important for integration at community level to combine the coordination strategy with devolution of decision-making power to generate community participation	COORDINATE provision of supports and services at the level of the family of the young child	COMPILE information, including knowledge and access to integrated services, on a local community basis in print and electronic media. (*Phase 1*) DEVELOP systems for priority allocations and subsidies for those at greatest risk (*Phase 2*)	Government, as delegated to local agencies with ECED practitioner input Government, delegated to local authority Government with technical assistance as needed
Need to integrate approaches at local and national levels		DESIGN approaches to integration of ECED services appropriate to local conditions	CONSULT with all sectors (private, governmental, NGO) on draft options for integrated approaches, including implementation implications (*Phase 1*) DECIDE on integration approaches and establish programmes for phased implementation (*Phase 2*)	Government leads consultation process

8. **(continued)**

IMPLEMENT integrated approaches for ECED for children from birth to school entry

ISSUE	BASIS FOR ACTION		RECOMMENDED ACTION	
	Current situation, Constraints/Opportunities (CS) (C) (O)	Goals/targets	Strategies/Actions (and timing in *phases)*	Responsibility (Nat, Reg, Intl.)
			ENCOURAGE the development of management strategies that will facilitate government functions in support of ECED (*Phase 1*) IDENTIFY all the elements of an integrated approach to training, service development and improvements in quality and establish programme of work (*Phase 2*)	

9. DESIGNATE budget allocation for ECED services and plan investment

ISSUE	BASIS FOR ACTION		RECOMMENDED ACTION	
	Current situation, Constraints/Opportunities (CS) (C) (O)	Goals/targets	Strategies/Actions (and timing in *phases)*	Responsibility (Nat, Reg, Intl.)
Identification of costs and sources of financing	CS: Grossly inadequate public and private resources to provide quality ECED provision. O: availability of cost benefit analyses of ECED provision, investment in ECED interventions which yield net gain for reinvestment, and substantial interest in policy of donors and IFIs Research has demonstrated significant gains in terms school participation, completion, and achievement, and reduces remedial and rehabilitation costs.	PROMOTE more equitable funding ratios from pre-primary to tertiary level CONSTRUCT an ECED budget review position statement with investment objectives for all partners	OVERHAUL budget allocations for ECED and place on an equitable basis with other education allocations, identifying areas and targets for investment in collaboration with other ECED providers (*Phase 1*) INITIATE joint financial planning with private sector, donors, individuals and IFIs (*Phase 1*) EVALUATE cost effectiveness of ECED models being piloted in areas of priority need (*Phase 2*) ESTIMATE costs of improving ECED services (including pay, staff-child ratios, and harmonisation and expanding coverage (*Phase 3*)	Government with relevant Ministries Collaborate with other ECED providers, NGOs, etc. Collaborate with potential funders

10. IMPROVE quality in monitoring, evaluation and training support in ECED

ISSUE	BASIS FOR ACTION		RECOMMENDED ACTION	
	Current situation, Constraints/Opportunities (CS) (C) (O)	Goals/targets	Strategies/Actions (and timing in *phases*)	Responsibility (Nat, Reg, Intl.)
Improve planning and monitoring systems for the development of integrated ECED services	CS: ECED data not part of the systematic data collection of the country. Data collection systems are inadequate, thus preventing useful analysis and access to additional funding. C: Cost and unavailability of sufficient technical expertise, and recurrent labour costs in assembling qualitative as well as quantitative data O: The improvement of monitoring and evaluation capacity for ECED activities will eventually improve external funding support. The current emphasis on Education Management Information Systems in the region could add to qualitative improvement in data collection mechanisms.	EXTEND central monitoring and data collection systems to include young child and ECED provision	IDENTIFY essential indicators for data collection on status of young children and their learning environment and ESTABLISH system to assess and evaluate effectiveness and quality in early childhood settings with special attention to transition (*Phase 1*) ENSURE that record keeping systems in ECED provisions informs central planning policy development (*Phase 2*) DEVELOP and sustain capacity of policy 'think tank' to influence decision making and make data available to inform research and practice needs. (*Phase 3*)	Government, with technical assistance, and specialist in the ECED area.

10. (continued)

IMPROVE quality in monitoring, evaluation and training support in ECED

ISSUE	BASIS FOR ACTION		RECOMMENDED ACTION	
	Current situation, Constraints/Opportunities (CS) (C) (O)	Goals/targets	Strategies/Actions (and timing in *phases)*	Responsibility (Nat, Reg, Intl.)
Strengthening training in support of ECED services	CS: training tends to be fragmented rather than integrated, reinforcing division between caregivers and teachers, and leading to different career paths and accreditation processes and financial outcomes C: cost of comprehensive pre-training to professional level is prohibitive, and there is some resistance amongst professionals to the development and adaptation of in service models of training and competency assessment. O: work based in service models of training and competency assessment, accreditation and certification, allow for considerable flexibility for individuals to pursue knowledge and skills at appropriate levels without undergoing expense of full-time training. Competency training models now exist which reflect all stages of the process from the poorly educated entrant to the professional equivalents of university or college trained graduates	INTEGRATE training based on vocational routes to qualifications, and on paths that can achieve teacher status	DESIGN integrated training model incorporating full age range with holistic aspects of children's needs and TARGET key workers in health and education sectors who need part-training in unfamiliar areas of ECED *(Phase 1)* TARGET potential leaders for ECED management for higher professional education and management skills training *(Phase 2)* DEVELOP integrated training materials which promote active research skill for developing cultural and community understandings *(Phase 2)* CONSTRUCT training and accreditation routes for all ECED personnel and enable parents and community members into the system.	Government, or delegated to national training agency, with ECED specialist support and of recognized tertiary institutions.

The way forward:

The Plan of Action suggests time-scales for planning in three distinct phases:

- The First phase identifies the need for a number of organizational tasks and the development of planning processes;
- The Second phase is concerned with the improvement of services, the introduction of new service models and staff training;
- The Third phase is concerned with the process of systematizing services, and ensuring their sustainability through monitoring, support and evaluation, and the training system established.

It is expected that the Plan of Action will be revised according to individual country priorities and situations and levels of ECED development.

While the length of time for each phase will depend on the extent of activities undertaken, it is intended that the Plan of Action will be fully implemented in each country within six years (1997-2002).

The intended process of implementation of the Plan of Action begins with its discussion at the May 1997 meeting of the Standing Committee of Ministers of Education to prepare a position to be presented at the July CARICOM Heads of Government Meeting in Jamaica, at the time of discussion of Caribbean Human Resource Development.

As a preparatory step towards this meeting, the Plan of Action will be discussed in the technical meeting of the Association of Caribbean Chief Education Officers in May 1997.

RESOLUTION ADOPTED

Appendix III

WHEREAS from the 1st day of April, 1997 to the 5th of April, 1997 the Second Caribbean Conference on Early Childhood Education was held in Barbados and attended by participants from Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Cuba, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands.

AND WHEREAS the participants attending the Conference were desirous of establishing a Caribbean Association for Early Childhood Education and Development;

AND WHEREAS it was proposed that such an Association should have as its main objectives the

(a) Advancement of Early Childhood Education and Development throughout the Caribbean;

(b) Setting up of a framework for the development of Early Childhood of Early Childhood Education and Development programmes in the Caribbean;

(c) Addressing of issues relating to Early Childhood Education and Development in the Caribbean in terms of policy, structures and implementation;

(d) Facilitation of a system of networking Early Childhood Education and Development bodies, organisations and personnel regionally and internationally;

(e) Encouragement and facilitation of the formation of national organisations throughout the Caribbean;

WE, the undersigned on behalf of our respective organisations hereby resolve on this 5th day of April, 1997 that the proposal for the establishment of a Caribbean Association for Early Childhood Education and Development be adopted.

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SITUATION ANALYSIS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES IN THE CARIBBEAN

Appendix IV

"...AFTER ALL, THE CARE AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS"
...BELIZE CRC CONFERENCE REPORT, P.52

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In October 1996 sixteen countries in the Caribbean region signed the Commitment to Action to improve national capacities to meet obligations to children - an outcome of the Caribbean Conference on the Rights of the Child, Belize City. The propose Plan of Action for Early Childhood Education and Development in the Caribbean countries will provide the logical foundation for these CRC commitments, just as appropriate attention to the earliest years of children's development provides the essential foundation block for later academic performance, economic productivity, and healthy social and civic behaviour.

This paper reviews the Region's progress in 'making the care and protection of children everybody's business'. It looks first at **national legislative and planning capacities** for supporting early childhood education and development (ECED) programmes, then surveys what is known about **types and coverage of provisions** for children in the Region from birth to school entry. And finally, the paper examines the ways in which countries are striving to **support and sustain ECED initiatives.** Each section also contains possible **ways forward** in developing systematic regional and national ECED plans of action.

A. The Region's Legislative and Planning Capacities

The Belize CRC Conference recognized that national legislative reform is both a lengthy and costly exercise, and therefore recommended regional collaboration in areas of research, and drafting of model legislation (e.g Children Act) which could then be adapted to national contexts. Increasing regional collaboration would also involve learning from current national activities that could inform other countries' initiatives. A few such examples included:

- Defining child legal status (Montserrat, Dominica, Guyana, Turks and Caicos)
- Licensing and standards for child care facilities (St. Lucia, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago)
- Defining parent and state responsibilities for children (Trinidad and Tobago)
- Developing national policy development/advocacy groups with all social partners (Jamaica, Belize, Trinidad and Tobago, Montserrat)

In terms of strengthening national capacity to plan for ECED provisions, the urgency of improving data systems to aid planning was noted, especially in targeting delivery for those children and families most in need (e.g Profiles system, Jamaica). Equally important was the need to see ECED provisions as integral to other government policies and provisions, such as health care, maternity leave provisions, housing development policies, poverty eradication/job creation programmes, environmental safety and sanitation requirements. Quality ECED provisions, particularly in contexts of poverty, cannot be sustained without these policies of convergence aimed at strengthening whole communities

B. The Region's Provisions for Children from Birth to School Entry

Throughout the Region pressures for greater spending and support for ECED are fueled by such socio-economic factors as increased female labour force participation and household headship, high levels of adult out-migration to earn (especially females), high levels of under- and unemployment, high rates of teenage childbearing, and poor quality services, especially for the one out of every three children living in poverty. Despite increasing recognition that poor quality starts for young children tend to create costlier remedial solutions later, governments of the region have been slow to redress the inequities implicit in national education budgets which spend the most on the oldest (and the wealthiest) children, while ECED provisions range from **.02% to 4%** of total budgets.

In surveying reports on services for children from twelve countries in the Region, the following were among the general trends noted:

- Accurate data on coverage and quality of provisions are very scarce
- NGOs and private individuals provide the bulk of preschool services, particularly for children below age three. Thus the full financial burden falls on parents, excluding most of the poor.
- Considerable fragmentation, overlap, and duplication in day care and preschool provisions obtain, especially re-training, standards of operation, and monitoring systems
- Low pay, low status, poor working conditions, high job turnover, limited career advancement are the norm for most day care/preschool providers

- The vast majority of pre-primary personnel are untrained or under-trained for their posts

- Physical facilities are often inadequate, with very limited learning and play materials and equipment

All these trends contribute to the most over-riding trend of all - the vast majority of the services are **not based on developmentally sound principles**. Even when levels of coverage are high, in response to parental need for supervised and safe environments for their children, critical aspects of poor quality undermine optimum child development. Teacher-directed activities in over-crowded, poorly-equipped classrooms predominate; opportunities for language development, environmental exploration and development of social skills and self-esteem are far to rare, and found almost exclusively in private centres.

Countering these trends will involve a number of integrated strategies, beginning with sensitisation of policy-makers to the real conditions and prospects of young boys and girls, given the hard survival choices of so many parents. Flexible models of service (e.g home-based care, overnight services, home-visiting programmes) are required which are more responsive to the real needs of poor rural and urban parents. The media must be enlisted to programme more appropriately for children, to strengthen parents' understanding of their role as the child's first educators, and to assist other stakeholders in the promotion of the value of quality ECED provisions for families and the wider society through public and parenting education strategiess. Investment partners will need to be enlisted who can see ahead to the economic and productive returns from training ECED personnel, from providing enriched learning environments, and from supporting disadvantaged parents.

C. Issues of Support and Sustainability

Just as a child integrate his/her whole development from many sources over time, an integrated approach to ECED will result in the most beneficial and cost-effective outcomes. Such an approach implies a mix of **cooperation** among many partners, **coordination** of programme at the national and local levels, **and/or convergence** of responsibilities under unitary management Whatever the integration approach, research evidence suggests that the mix of elements (preventive health care, ECED services, with structural, social and economic supports) are most effectively combined with a devolution of decision-making power to generate community participation and ownership.

Rigorous analysis of national budgets, supported by improved data systems, can assist the shifting of priorities downwards to earlier investments in children as well as the targetting of these investments to reap the highest social and economic returns. To sustain these investments, governments will also need to develop and support (with other partners) coherent training systems, using regional and distance teaching strategies where possible, that provide career routes toward the highest levels of ECED training, and produce an ongoing cadre of personnel demanding and delivering higher quality services.

In conclusion, the balance of regional cooperation with phased national action should move governments and their social partners forward together in harnessing the supports and in empowering local capacities for ECED efforts in the interests of the rights of each child from birth.

A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF THE EVOLUTION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION IN THE CARIBBEAN

INTRODUCTION

The islands of the Caribbean region reflect the colonial and linguistic heritage of four nationalities, the English, the French, the Spanish and the Dutch. The Anglophone Caribbean comprising sixteen countries is the largest group. Moving from a northwesterly to southeasterly direction, these include viz: , the Cayman Islands, the Bahama Islands, Jamaica (the largest of the group), the Virgin Islands, Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, Montserrat, St. Kitts - Nevis, Dominica, St Vincent & the Grenadines, St. Lucia, Grenada, Trinidad & Tobago, Barbados. Belize to the north and Guyana to the south, although a part of the Central and South American mainlands respectively, are also included among the English-speaking conglomerate.

The Spanish -speaking countries include Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico, while the French-speaking countries are Haiti, Martinique, Guadeloupe and the French side of St. Maarten. Dutch is the official language of the Netherland Antilles viz: the Dutch side of St Maarten, Curacao, Aruba, Bonaire and Suriname on the South - American mainland.

The historical development of the economic, social and cultural life of these countries is remarkably similar, moreso within the context of a shared colonial past. To this is owed the somewhat common evolutionary pattern of early childhood care and education in the region, traditionally characterized by a predominance of private sector involvement in service delivery, with varying degrees of programme maintenance and monitoring supports from Governments. This type of partnership approach predominates within the English-speaking group of countries, the exceptions being Barbados, Grenada and Guyana with the highest levels of government commitment and involvement at this level of the educational system. Cuba is also outstanding in the region for having developed its child care and education system to developed world standards as a consequence of its political and social policy orientations.

The Post War Period to 1969

During the post war period of the early twentieth century, economic and social changes worldwide increased the demand for child care and development services outside of the home. Rapid industrialization created new employment opportunities for both men and women and this led to gradual erosion of supportive family structures such as the extended family which traditionally provided for the child care needs of working family members. Organized, outside of the home, custodial child care facilities for working class parents sprang up in response to demand, and were usually established by private individuals, benevolent organizations like the Child Welfare League and institutions such as the church. In Trinidad & Tobago, the first private nursery school was opened in 1934, and in Jamaica, the first community basic school was opened in 1938.

By the mid 1950's converging factors intensified the demand for early childhood facilities to offer more than custodial child care. A proliferation of research in child development and learning in developed countries, acknowledged the benefits to later school success of planned early childhood education opportunities, especially for the underprivileged child. Post-emancipation educational reforms in the region increased provisions for higher level educational programmes and there was heightened interest among middle, and upper class parents in the benefits of preschool education as the medium for providing their children with the academic start that would ensure later benefit from the expanded educational opportunities.

International Support for ECCD

In spite of the rapid increase in number of local private early childhood facilities known by various names across the region-day care centres, creches, preschool centres, nursery schools, dame schools, basic schools- supply was inadequate to satisfy demand. This gave rise to situations such as developed in Jamaica, where scores of preschool aged children not attending any organized programme wandered idly about while their parents were at work. The early preschool programmes were highly academic in focus. Teachers demonstrated little awareness of the qualitative differences in early childhood learning needs and appropriate pedagogical strategies. Physical facilities were often substandard and in unsafe and inappropriate locations.

Governments, pressured by rising social and economic problems, were to varying degrees reluctant to include early childhood care and education in the budgetary provisions for social services. Hence, the delivery of these services continued for the most part unmonitored by government and almost totally dominated by the local private sector. **UNICEF** and the **Bernard Van Leer Foundation (BVLF),** were among the first international funding organizations to provide sustained assistance to the region in support of child care, development and education services. UNICEF commenced

assistance to the Caribbean in the early 1950's, channelling aid to countries for child survival programmes through various regional institutions. UNICEF has since continued to play a major role in heightening regional and national concern and promoting the development of early childhood education and child and family support programmes.

In 1966, The **Bernard Van Leer Foundation** in collaboration with the University of the West Indies (Jamaica campus) embarked on a project to improve the quality of early childhood education in the region. The Project for Early Childhood Education (PECE), directed by the late D.R.B Grant of the UWI Faculty of Education, aimed to expand and improve the fledgling basic school system in Jamaica through: systematic and on-going in-service training of paraprofessional teachers; development of a curriculum appropriate to the needs of the children, the school conditions and ability levels of the teachers; production of teaching/learning materials for teachers and pupils consistent with the curriculum; research to determine the impact of all project inputs on children's cognitive development.

The success of this project was of national, regional and international significance, as in 1972, the Jamaican Government accepted the model and expanded it nationally to create the present Basic School System.

Regionally, the model was extended to Dominica as the Preschool Education Project, and subsequently has been adopted or adapted by other Caribbean countries in developing their own national programmes. In 1967, arising from local discussions on the situation of young children in the Caribbean, the Government of Barbados requested UNICEF to jointly sponsor a regional conference on **"The Needs of the Young Child In the Caribbean"**. This was held in November of that year, with representation from fourteen English-speaking Caribbean countries, Suriname, the University of the West Indies, and relevant United Nations organizations.

The conference highlighted the deteriorating social and economic conditions of individual countries which jeopardized the normal healthy development of young children. These problems included among others, rural-urban and overseas outmigration of parents in search of work, leaving behind their young children in very unsatisfactory child care arrangements; high levels of malnutrition among the young; inadequate health, nutrition and day care services targeting young children; rising teenage pregnancy rates; unemployment and increasing poverty. Among the several conference recommendations to ameliorate the existing conditions affecting children- legislation, health, nutrition, day care- was one which called for "regional efforts to share tasks of various types"(Conference Report, p. 57, 1967), in view of individual countries' limited capacity to satisfactorily implement programmes.This conference proved to be the catalyst which intensified activities in advocacy, training and programme expansion in the region.

THE DECADE OF THE SEVENTIES

As social and economic problems worsened during the 1970's, an upsurge of research activity in the region expanded the base of empirical data on social and economic issues which could inform programme development as well as support proposals for international funding assistance. Such research provided valuable information on problems of children and their families, e.g. health and nutrition, child care and protection, socialization of children, social services provision, family life and cultural issues. Grant (1980), extensively cites some of these studies in "Volume 1: The Literature in Retrospect", of his " Life Style Study - Children of the Lesser World in the English-Speaking Caribbean", a series of monographs. This five volume series was developed from studies commissioned by the Bernard Van Leer Foundation, in preparation for the International Year of the Child, 1980.

The nature of the social problems prevalent in the region is captured below in the listed percentage ranges across English-speaking Caribbean countries, for selected social indicators.:

Social Indicators	% Ranges
Single female headed households	35 - 50
Illegitimacy Rates among 15-19 yr olds	60 - 80
Unemployment -general	14 - 25
Unemployment- among women	50 - 60
Child malnutrition- mild-severe	6 - 40
Day care/preschool coverage	6 - 25

Source: Davies, R. Report "Unicef in the Eastern Caribbean", Kingston, Jamaica, 1986
Grant, DRB "The Literature in Retrospect"- Vol. 1, Life Style Study, UWI, Jam. ,1980

In spite of increased levels of assistance from UNICEF, the Bernard Van Leer Foundation, the Canadian Save the Children Fund and other funding organizations, to improve the status of children and children's services, individual governments during this period, were slow to invest further public funds towards increasing and improving provisions for early childhood care and education. Grenada, Barbados, Jamaica, Guyana and Montserrat moved ahead of other countries in providing some government support for programmes. Some governments offered minimal support while others such as St Vincent and the British Virgin Islands, had no government involvement in early childhood programmes. The private sector was urged to continue in the lead role of service providers.

Regional and subregional training activities for early childhood practitioners were executed by institutions such as The Regional Preschool Child Development Centre (RPCDC -

renamed in 1986, The Caribbean Child Development Centre, CCDC), established by UNICEF at UWI- Jamaica in 1972, in response to the recommendations of the 1967 Barbados Conference. Servol in Trinidad and Cansave Child Welfare Centre in St. Vincent also provided subregional training for countries in the eastern Caribbean. These regional activities increased co-operation among countries in the sharing and development of resources and expertise to benefit national programmes. Some of the positive developments/activities in early childhood care and education during the 1970's include:

1970 - Jamaica - Study on " Living Conditions of Basic School Children", by Grant, influences the development of appropriate experiences for disadvantaged children in basic schools; findings applicable regionally

Trinidad - Launch of first government preschool project, assisted by BVLF, at La Pastora Community Centre; led to establishment of 15 such centres by 1993

1972 - Jamaica - Government expands Basic School system islandwide; establishes Early Childhood Unit within the Ministry of Education

- Establishment of Regional Preschool Child Development Centre, at UWI Jamaica campus- to support regional activities in early childhood care and development through training, research, advocacy and development of innovative models of service delivery, and curriculum support materials

1973 - Trinidad - Servol establishes first preschool centre in Lavantille

1974 - Trinidad - Government establishes Pre school Unit in the Ministry of Education

Belize - Christian Social Council forms Committee for the Promotion of Early Childhood Education

1975 - Jamaica - Government launches National Day Care Programme

1976 - Grenada - Government amends Education Act to include responsiblity for early childhood care and education programmes

1977 - Jamaica - UWI offers B.Ed in early childhood education for the first time, with assistance of BVLF and the EEC.

1978 - Antigua - Establishment of Sir Luther Wynter Child Development Centre, a model preschool programme and training centre run by the University Centre.

1979 - Belize - Establishment of Preschool Education Unit in the Ministry of Education.

THE 1980'S TO THE PRESENT

The 1980's marked the real turning point in achievement of significant advances in early childhood care and education in the region. Three factors contributed to this forward trend:

a) The designation of 1980 as the International Year of the Child (IYC), sparked a flurry of child-focused activities in individual countries. Local Committees were set up to develop proposals and plans for achieving the IYC objectives. Many regional governments recognized the need for regulations regarding the care and welfare of the preschool child, hence the development of minimum operational standards was highlighted during that year. Most countries drafted standards, but since then legislative action has been slow in coming.

b) The established pattern of UNICEF assistance to countries shifted from sourcing through regional institutions, to direct country assistance, due to the ineffectiveness of the former arrangement in coping with the dimensions and pace of individual countries' programme development thrusts . Between 1979 and 1981, the following governments signed their first direct Programmes of Co-operation with UNICEF: Antigua & Barbuda, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, St Kitts-Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent. Several new agreements with these and other countries in the region have been signed since.

c) valuative studies of selected institutions and programmes highlighted the main problems affecting early childhood care and development provision in the region and made recommendations for the way forward. The GLY Report (Grant, Lusan, Yorke, 1979), the "Review/Evaluation Report of the Selected Services for Children Programme" (Ying, 1983), the SPRINGER Report (Springer, 1984), the "Review/ Evaluation Report on UNICEF in the Eastern Caribbean" (Davies, 1986), are mentioned in this regard.

Aspects of Programmes Targetted for Improvement

The direct funding approach had immediate benefits as countries embarked on **refurbishing and building day care and preschool facilities**; increased supplies of furniture,

outdoor play equipment, toys and other learning materials, available through UNIPAC (the supplies arm of UNICEF) and other sources. There has been since then a notable increase in the number of early childhood programmes in most countries and logically, of **enrolment and access**.

The data below provide evidence of this expansion:

Country	No. Progs in 1980	No. Progs in 1990
Antigua and Barbuda	32	50
Belize	24	81 (1994 data)
Dominica	54	66
Grenada	87*	121*
Jamaica	1500	200 (1993 data)
Montserrat	-	15
St. Lucia	45	167
St. Kitts	23	42
St. Vincent	37	71
Trinidad	50+	148+

+ (public centres only)
* includes infant departments of primary schools

Source: Davies, R., UNICEF in the Eastern Caribbean", Kingston Jamaica, 1986
.. Caribbean Journal of Education", Vol 17, No 2, Sep.1995
World Bank - "The Trinidad & Tobago Early Childhood Survey", 1995

Besides the emphasis on improving physical facilities and expanding enrolment, there were other aspects of programme delivery which attracted attention. **Parent education** activities developed momentum and have continued in that trend to the present time. The focus of such programmes was to increase the awareness and understanding of parents regarding the psychological and other aspects of childhood development and also to increase their knowledge and appreciation for the content emphases and methodological approaches appropriate for early childhood programmes. Although countries in the region have experienced varying degrees of success, parent education efforts have continued to be boosted by the contribution of many local and regional organizations. Some of the better known include UNICEF, BVLF, UNFPA, Save the Children Fund, SERVOL, CCDC, PAREDOS, among others. Some governments now officially support a national strategy for parent education, eg. the Ministry of Education based Coalition for Better Parenting in Jamaica. Parenting Partners (an association of Jamaican organizations dedicated to improving parenting skills), has made a very important contribution to the advancement of parenting education by developing and publishing in 1994, a two volume manual, " Pathways to Parenting- A Caribbean Approach". The manual offers a step by step training course for parent group facilitators and an accompanying comprehensive facilitator's guide. It is presently used widely throughout the region.

The findings of the evaluative studies previously mentioned pointed to a need for renewed focus on **teacher training,** to better enable teachers at all levels to acquire and demonstrate skills appropriate for effective teaching and guiding of children at the early childhood stage. A more systematic approach to teacher/ caregiver training developed during this period and has gradually become, with the continued support of interternational organizations such as UNICEF, BVLF, Save the Children Fund, and more recently the World Bank, a clear area of government commitment in most countries.

It has been possible through such assistance to expand the types and levels of training programmes offered since the mid-1980's. In addition to regular in-service training for preschool teachers at the para and semi-professional levels, certificate, diploma and degree level programmes in early childhood education are now provided within the region.(These are selectively offered at Teachers' Colleges and at UWI in Jamaica and Trinidad). The BVLF has supported innovative training models such as the Jamaica -based "North Coast Project" (1987 - 1993) and the five summers, part time bachelor of education degree programme at UWI(1985 - 1992). In some countries, the training of caregivers continues to be less organized and systematic than that provided for preschool teachers. The RPCDC (now CCDC) , Servol and Vinsave Training Centre must be credited for their outstanding contribution to the training of hundreds of early childhood practitioners in the region.

In the 1980's, much interest was shown by individual countries, in **developing new, or improving existing curricula** for children's as well as teacher training programmes. The concern was for better quality preschool experiences for children. In Jamaica for instance the multifaceted Program for Advancement of Childhood Education(PACE), was launched by government in 1987 to improve the working conditions of basic school teachers and the learning environment in basic schools. In that year also, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago officially invited Servol to expand its training model islandwide as the national training programme. During this period, Servol's "Spices" curriculum for 3-5 year olds, Jamaica's " Readiness" curriculum for 3-5 year olds and St. Lucia's "Pre school Curriculum Manual" all came into being and have been used nationally in preschool programmes since. The RPCDC, through annual regional workshops for preschool programme co-ordinators , spearheaded a move towards regional curriculum standardization for the training of early childhood caregivers/teachers. This collective action resulted in the production of a six volume " Manual for the Training of Early Childhood Educators in the Caribbean", between 1984 and 1985. This series, although currently in need of updating, is still used as principal training resource material in a number of countries.

Advocacy is another programme related area that grew steadily stronger during this period. The heightened interest in

early childhood care and education generated during the International Year of the Child, was kept alive in individual countries in various ways, e.g. designating a special "early childhood" week or month each year for public attention to early childhood issues and happenings; formation of various local associations of day care providers and preschool teachers, with an agenda to maintain public attention on issues relevant to early childhood care and education. Other more recent international developments such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the 1990 World Summit on Children have provided further motivation for advocacy groups to intensify their efforts towards achievement of desired goals.

Commiting Governments to Action

Governments in the region are becoming more responsive to local and international pressure to invest more resources in early childhood care and education. Most are signatories to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the World Summit goals. Since the advent of the 1990's, there has been growing concern for issues such as programme quality, appropriateness, affordability and sustainability, in the face of diminishing external resources. Of equal concern has been the inequitable access to programmes for the rural child, and more effective targetting of poor children. Different cost-effective models are being tried eg. the BVLF roving caregiver model in Jamaica, homevisiting and home based nursery models throughout the region, all aimed at reaching poor children, especially in low income and rural areas.

The dilemma regional governments now face is that in spite of the will to support improvement and extension of early childhood care and development programmes, there are limited resources from which to make increased financial commitments. Allocations for early childhood care and education still remain minute compared to other levels of the education system for most countries. In some instances, the percentage allocation to this programme level is actually declining. Some interest is being shown in integrated programming approaches such as have been tried successfully in Latin America and other regions. This approach encourages intersectoral co-operation in ensuring that various services for the child are offered from the base of an early childhood programme. This approach has been shown in Colombia and England, for example, to be more cost effective than the traditional approach.

In the search for solutions, governments in the region will be encouraged to examine these integrated options for providing affordable and sustainable quality care for children. In this regard, there will be need for greater networking of governments in the region among each other as well as with countries outside of the region, in order to facilitate learning from shared experiences. Servol has already set precedence for such intra-regional networking through the annual meetings held up until recently in Trinidad with support from the Bernard Van Leer Foundation. The value of such annual meetings to regional networking must be underscored, and Caribbean governments should now rise to the challenge of collectively supporting the resumption of these regional assemblies.

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WHY DO CHILDREN OF THE CARIBBEAN NEED PROGRAMMES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT?

1. The first three years of a child's life are critical for their development

At no point in the development of scientific research into the development of the human brain has there been a moment such as the present for proving that this statement is true. Recent research shows how the electric activity of the brain cells changes the physical structure of the brain. "There is a timescale to brain development, and the most important year is the first"[1]. A child's brain needs the stimulation of experiences in the environment from birth in order to develop to its full capacity. What this means for children deprived of such stimulation is that their brains suffer.

Experience is the chief architect of the brain[2]

Children who don't play much or who are rarely touched develop brains 20% to 30% smaller than normal for their age. For a child who has experienced abuse or emotional neglect, the effects may be impossible to erase at a later stage. Before birth, changes in a child's environment in the womb caused by the mother's malnutrition, drug abuse or viral infection can damage developmental process resulting in epilepsy, mental retardation and other negative effects on the brain.

Parents and carers can be enabled to provide the experience

The development of high quality ECED programmes can at least arrest negative brain development and at best provide the environment for the development of the child to his or her full potential. Where could programmes start except with the parent or child's carer? The research data show the importance of hands on parenting, of finding time to cuddle a baby, talk with a toddler and provide infants with stimulating experiences. Even if we cannot change what happens before birth, we can change what happens afterwards. Scientists have describe these first years as providing sensitive points, like "windows", through which it is possible to make critical inputs in a child's development to shape and stabilise brain development, and create long lasting structures. In addition, unless micronutrient and protein-energy malnutrition is prevented or corrected by age two or three it is very difficult to reverse the damage later.

A child's development is more than a need; it is a human right

Robert Myers in The Twelve Who Survive[3], and in a number of subsequent publications including those specifically looking at needs in the Caribbean, *makes eight arguments* for investment in ECED programmes. His first argument is a *human rights argument*: children have a right to live and to develop to their fullest potential. In this context, most Caribbean Governments have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child which promotes not only the survival but the fullest development of the child. This recent research demonstrates how we cannot ignore the environment within which children are born and live in the first year of life, and their right to conditions which afford them their rights as human beings. In thinking about the implications for ECED programming in the Caribbean, what more persuasive argument do we need for not only support to parents but for good, affordable day care? It "is not a luxury or a fringe benefit for welfare mothers and working parents but essential brain food for the next generation[4]".

2. Early Intervention in the years before school entry has long term effects

The *scientific argument* for investment in ECED programmes is based not only on the immediate benefits for the child and its parents, in terms of the development of intelligence, personality and social behavior, but on the long term outcomes and benefits in terms of the child's ability to contribute to the community and the nation.

Rich experiences really do produce rich brains

It is becoming increasingly clear that well-designed programmes can help many children overcome glaring deficits in their environment. If the opportunity to provide programmes of high quality is not lost, the new environments created can model children's minds in the ways in which Caribbean societies aspire. There is solid research in support of high quality ECED programming from across the world, perhaps the most well known of which is the Highscope/Perry Preschool longitudinal study[5] which followed a set of disadvantaged African American urban children exposed to a high quality ECE programme, and a control group, for over 20

[1]NEWMAN, F., (1997) President of the USA Education Commission, quoted in same article, p35
[2]PERRY, B. Dr., (1997) Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, as quoted in Time Magazine, 10 February, pg39
[3]MYERS, R.G., (1992) The Twelve Who Survive, Strengthening Programmes of Earlt Childhood Development in the Third World, London, Routledge, 1992
[4]NASH, M.J., (1997) Fertile Minds, Time Magazine, 10 February 1997, p40
[5]HIGHSCOPE Educational Foundation (1964/1992) Study of 123 African Americans born in poverty

years. The test group at age 27 were interviewed and with corroborating independent data produced the following findings: the experimental group had 1/5 to the arrests of the control group, received less welfare assistance in their adult lives, and higher school achievement and literacy scores, had more numbers graduate from high school, made more long lasting marriages, had fewer out of wedlock births and displayed greater social responsibility.

Positive results similar to those of the Perry study came from a longitudinal study providing parent training at home and in groups in low income urban communities in Turkey. The impact of the improved parenting skills was still measurably strong when the subjects were found ten years later - measures such as higher participation of the father in family life, higher grade achievement and better school performance of the students[6].

Surely this is also an issue of moral and social values?

Yes, it is. As Robert Myers points out in his *social and moral argument*, "through children humanity transmits its values. To preserve moral and social values - or to change them 'for the better' - one must begin with children. Values such as living together harmoniously or appreciating and protecting the environment begin to take hold in the preschool years and can be promoted through child care and development programmes". In the examples of the studies in the USA and Turkey, the child's experience of the stability of family life supported by high quality ECED Programmes and the associated confidence and self esteem which comes with achievement, assisted them to break the intergenerational cycle of family break down (of which crime, poverty and low academic progress are contributing factors).

Can children benefit from primary school without enrichment?

Most Caribbean governments only begin their formal investments in people with major public expenditure for primary education, after critical shaping has already taken place. Despite high primary enrolment in the English Speaking Caribbean, much more could be achieved to reduce primary repetition and drop out rates by ensuring that children have developed sufficiently to make the transition into school in the first place. As poor children enter primary school, UNICEF cites the close association between lack of achievement and low self esteem and anxiety.

Another key factor is inadequate nutrition; poor academic achievers weigh less, have a poor history of breakfast, have low haemoglobin levels and visit a clinic for illness several more times than higher achievers[7]. This is a much more fundamental problem than lack of 'readiness' for school. Based on the scientific research above, remedial education if undertaken at age three or four may be far more effective that at a later stage. If it is not undertaken, the research seems to support the Caribbean experience that "eight is too late" - half of our children graduating from primary school will have repeated at least one year, and a quarter will have dropped out.

3. **Investment in ECED increases future economic productivity and employment**

This is not only an *economic argument* but one that make common sense. "A person who is well developed physically, mentally, socially and emotionally will be in a better position to be employed and to contribute economically to family, community and country"[8]. Robert Myers cites the wealth of research which points to the links between improvements in the levels of schooling and improvements in economic productivity: schooling helps to build skills such as the ability to organize knowledge into meaningful categories, to transfer knowledge from one situation to another, and to be more selective in the use of information; it facilitates greater technological adaptiveness; it relates directly to both increased formal productivity and productivity in the informal market sector.

UNICEF and World Bank research show that an extra year of primary education increases the future productivity of a person (in terms of hourly wage) between 10 and 30%[9].

Integrated approaches to investment pays off for the child

But there is little value in schooling even at primary level which is inaccessible to those children who are unable developmentally to benefit from it. Whilst urging the investment at primary level and beyond, the literature from the World Bank demonstrates the potential of an integrated approach to investment across sectors which will yield net gain to be reinvested back into early childhood education and development. Targeting only one aspect for intervention (for example increasing child survival and school performance will increase the net gain for reinvestment. "ECD is an investment of which we can expect a future pay off. There is nothing that forces us to start such investments at age 6, with primary

[6] KAGITCIBASI, BEKMAN and GOSKEL (1195) Amulti purpose model of non formal education in Coordinators Notebook. The Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, New York

[7] UNICEF May (1996) The Economics of Child Poverty in Jamaica CAO, Bridgetown, Barbados

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[9] UNICEF (1996) Policy Documents Regional Perspective, ROLAC, Santafe de Bogota, Colombia

education"[10] That pay off is estimated to be sevenfold in the Highscope study - a benefit cost ratio of over $7.00 was returned to the public for ever $1.00 invested.

ECED investment reduces economic strain on societies

Not only does the child benefit; ECED programmes enable increased labor force participation by women, and free older siblings to go to school or to get a job. Furthermore, there is a savings potential and *programme efficacy argument:* Robert Myers cites studies demonstrating the potential of ECED programmes to reduce work losses because children of workers are well cared for; to reduce health costs because good care involves preventive measures; to reduce inefficiency in the school system by reducing repetition, drop out and remedial programmes, and to reduce costs related to social welfare and crime.

4 **ECED reduces social, economic and gender inequalities**

In much of the English Speaking Caribbean, one in three children are living in poverty. Although traditionally child rearing has been a role ascribed to one gender in the home context, increasingly it is the women who head 30-40% of the region's households and whose participation in the labor force steadily increases. The human waste incurred by the neglect of ECED investments is evidenced by the high costs of corrective and remedial programmes for addressing problems as they surface in later life from chronic malnutrition, births to unprepared and immature teenage mothers, numbers of children engaged in child labor and prostitution, numbers of children in the poorest quintile of society who leave secondary institutions without certification, barely literate, and end up in the ranks of the unemployed, the rising instance of child abuse and child rape, and the sharp increase in crimes committed by the under 25's.

The gap between rich and poor never closes

The circle in which poor children find themselves is avicious one. Children from poor families often fall quickly and progressively behind their more advantaged peers in their readiness for school and life, and that gap is never closed. Governments can intervene to foster early childhood development,; failure to do so is a tacit endorsement and strengthening of the inequalities which exist[11].

The precarious position of boys and the disadvantaged position of girls

Contradictory patterns in the region of apparent advantage or disadvantage to boys in the education system are indicative of huge changes taking place in Caribbean societies from the family to the wider institutions in society. Whilst there is evidence in some areas that boys are less prepared on entry to schools than girls, and are later out-numbered in achievement and enrolment at tertiary levels by as much as 2 to 1, it is also true that girls still experience discrimination in low expectations in the outcomes of the investment in their education. ECED programmes in the region have demonstrated that expectations of girls' achievements can be raised by high quality programmes, and that investment in programmes can increase women's productivity and result in savings to society. However, the precarious position of male children in the region emerging from recent research needs to be addressed in ECED programmes[12]. Both these strands in wealth and gender equalities make up the *social equity argument.*

Integrated approaches to ECED must reflect a world changed by social and economic conditions

Children survive worldwide at an increasing rate - now 14 in every 15, compared to 5 out of 6 in 1960, but other changes challenge the vision and will of government to act in the best interests of the very young child: changing family structures and childrearing practices, rural-urban migration, growing participation of women in the labor force, the challenge to men to participate equally within nurturing and household contexts and the relevance of schooling content and methodologies are *all arguments* which constitute a strong rationale for supporting increased investment in ECED programmes. No one source of energy or funding (family, community, governmental, non-governmental) is sufficient; just as the arguments for ECED are interwoven, the approaches need to be integrated by those and for those affected[13]

[10]Van der GAAG, J. (1996) Early Childhood Development. Investing in the Future. World Bank, Washington

[11]MYERS, R.G., (1995) these two sections are drawn from Myers' formulation of arguments for ECED programmes

[12]BROWN, J et al (1995) and (1997) Gender Socialization Project Reports, Caribbean Child Development Centre, University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica

[13]MYERS, R.G. (1995) with many thanks to Robert Myers' work in identifying the research and the arguments

FROM BELIZE TO BARBADOS: AFFORDING CHILDREN THEIR RIGHTS FROM BIRTH

Introduction: a Social Partnership Approach in the Caribbean

For those of you who attended the Caribbean Conference on the Rights of the Child held in Belize City in October last year, you will be aware of the considerable commitments that Governments in the Region made to specific actions to improve their countries' capacities to meet obligations to children under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In a process of tutorials, conference participants identified critical steps for child protection and care, amongst which was the role of day care in the lives of young children, and their families. Some very interesting recommendations were made. First, participants noted that whether or not day care was privately run (such as in home based care), there should still be an involvement by the community and the government:

> "because after all the care and protection of children is *everybody's business*"[14] (p.52) (our emphasis)

In the same session, participants also recommended that training be provided not only to caregivers and teachers in child care settings, but also to parents, "because the *parent is the child's first teacher*". The theme of comprehensive involvement was emphasised in the recommended supports for child care services from health staff and community workers, and from government in the form of financial subsidy and standards setting; in addition:

> "We saw it necessary , as a group, to ensure that *all the social partners were involved*: the private sector, who may contribute materials for either construction or renovation, the members of the community to ensure that standards are adhered to" (ibid) (our emphasis)

Delegates made these recommendations in the context of exploring child care and protection concerns. In most parts of the world, the recommendations that tend to follow are usually separate from recommendations that relate to the education of the child, or to the economic or social circumstances of a community, and they thus tend to identify a need for a social welfare service for the child. What is very interesting in the Belize recommendations is the way in which participants in this region are thinking:

1. **Day care is seen as a matter of concern for everyone** in the society, not a private family need met by any means that a family can afford; and society here is seen as a combination of forces within the community and government.

2. **Training must include all those involved, and in particular the parent** because he or she is seen as the first educator of the child.

3. **Day care requires support from a social partnership** of those with economic stakes, such as the vested interests the private sector and government have in stability and productivity; governmental concerns for the safety and viability of services to children, which require standards and monitoring in order to be effective; community concerns for the health and development of children; and family concerns for their individual sons and daughters.

Our Brief: Supporting Early Childhood Initiatives in the Region

Here in Barbados, in this Second Conference on Early Childhood Education in the Caribbean, we are being asked to consider early childhood education in its broadest sense, to incorporate the development of the very young child from birth; the role of all educators of the child including parents and media and other influences in society; and the ways in which social partnerships can be forged to produce early childhood services for children.

It is because this brief is so broad that we have also needed to define the concept and approach that you will hear in this paper, and that you will hear and see reflected or contested in a number of papers and contributions in this conference.

1. Using the term Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED)

We will be using the term Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) to incorporate the meanings in initiatives and services for children from birth to school age. To shorten this to ECE would tend to make us think of pre-school services alone; to shorten this to ECD might make us seem to exclude them. In some countries the acronym is broadened further to include Care; we have not done so here because we want Care to be seen in a dynamic way as integral both to education and development. Care on its own has tended not to imply a similar dynamic and sense of process as the other two terms, but rather a sense of statis or custodianship.

[14] UNICEF CAO. (1996) The Report of the Caribbean Conference on the Rights of the Child, Bridgetown, Barbados

2. Developing the framework in the Draft plan of Action

We will be exploring the situations affecting ECED in the region within the same framework as the proposed Draft Plan for Caribbean Countries. As you know the Draft Plan of Action is designed as a tool to assist countries to plan ECED activities. In using the same framework, we hope in this paper to be contributing in a logical way to a process of consideration of the issues so as not to confuse the development of Country based planning.

3. . Assisting country based analysis of ECED

We will also be setting out an analytical structure into which, having examined the trends affecting the Caribbean Region, you will be able to locate your own data sets and responses to the UNICEF CAO questionnaire. We are not in a position to offer you an analysis of your own country's ECED planning and implementation at this stage but hope that you will find the examples from individual countries, and the analysis of trends, useful for interpreting the situation as you monitor and evaluate it in your own country.

FIRST STEPS: Do we have the legislation and planning capacity for ECED?

First we looked at statements made to the Belize Conference on the legislative framework and planning capacity for children, and specifically for early childhood, of individual participating countries in the Region.

1. Taking a collaborative approach in the Region

A recommendation of the Belize conference was for a collaborative approach between countries to take forward the legislative and institutional measures needed for compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This approach might call on the legal facilities of CARICOM to carry out studies in Member States *"to bring about some form of uniformity on the various bits of legislation which deal with the rights of children"* (ibid, p.55). Also, it might be united with the OECS initiative mentioned in the Statement from Dominica (ibid, p.139) to draft a model Education Act for improving the quality of education for children.

2. Creating a new vision for children in legislation

However there was recognition at the Belize Conference that the potential of legislation to shape rights and expectations in a society would take considerably more thought than just compiling what already existed with amendments and revisions necessary to ensure compliance with the Convention. The capacity of legislation to move a society into a new vision and understanding, to enable and empower persons to act in their own interests, is created when rights and duties are framed not only to protect persons but to mobilise and promote new ways of being. The group reporting on legislative and institutional measures at the Conference agreed on the need for all legislation to:

> *"be brought under the umbrella of a single welfare act, for example, a Children's Act"* (ibid, p. 55).

3. The lack of legislation framing ECED service development

How would this development assist the process of ECED in countries in the Region? It would enable us to help one another to fill a gap which exists in every country that participated at Belize, a gap created by the lack of legislative framework for conceptualising, enabling and providing comprehensive early childhood services. In the Country statements annexed to the Belize Conference Report, each country indicated their legislative planning. Some countries have indicated the need for legislation to govern the **protection of children at risk**, specifying in clear terms the statutory responsibilities of the State, responsibilities which may include the need to establish provisions to ensure adequate day care (Grenada, Suriname). Others are more concerned with **the legal status of the child**: Montserrat plans to table a Status of Children Act this year, and Dominica, Guyana and the Turks and Caicos Islands identified a need for improvement on legal child status.

Trinidad and Tobago identified the need specifically to legislate to **regulate child care facilities**. In Belize, the National Committee for Families and Children (NCFC) plans to advocate for enabling legislation to ensure provision of child care and day care services, with special attention to improving affordability for low income families, and to facilitating the entry of more women into the work force.

In Belize, a project to develop a Families and Children Act is being undertaken by the NCFC, the Ministry of Human Resources, UNICEF and the National Childrens Home Action for Children in the UK. Amongst other goals, the proposed Act is intended to promote the **Child's role in decision making,** to foster their capacity to grant informed consent as stipulated in the Convention. This is a difficult area for enforcement in early childhood, but it can lead to the development of advocacy services for children particularly those caught in difficult circumstances in which no adult can be said to be speaking for them, apart from their own immediate interests.

4. Defining responsibility of parent and government

Also, Trinidad and Tobago are considering further amendments to the Children (Amendment) Act 1994 to include "making better provisions for the rights and incidents of parenthood and guardianship and for parental responsibility" (ibid, p. 126). This would be an important step in identifying what is meant by parental responsibility; how far parental responsibility extends for the development of a child from

birth, and what the governmental responsibilities are to provide support for families and specific interventions for the protection of the child's interests.

5. Leadership for ECED in national groupings

Several countries have identified key committees of non-governmental organizations which are leading the development of policy issues and programmes in early childhood on behalf of the country. Several have done so within the context of committees established to formulate national Plans of Action for the Implementation of the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s (Guyana, Jamaica). In Trinidad and Tobago there is a National Council for Early Childhood Care and Education. In Montserrat, a proposal to establish a Child Advocacy Board has been submitted to the Honourable Attorney General. If established, the Board will have responsibility for identifying areas of legal reform and for making necessary recommendations. In Belize, there is the National Committee for Families and Children (NCFC) which has become the government's main advisory body in relation to issues dealing with families and children. The Belize NCFC has ensured that it has the mechanisms in place for establishing social partnerships: its members include the Cabinet Secretary, heads of Social Sector Government Departments, representatives of Churches, the Business Community and appropriate Educational Institutions, etc. With UNICEF/ Belize's financial support and technical assistance, a Secretariat headed by a paid Executive Secretary and support staff was put in place to coordinate the work of the NCFC on a daily basis.

6. Providing national standards and guidelines

In Belize, the NCFC in collaboration with a number of agencies has researched and published a Survey of Day Care Centers in Belize City, Burrell Boom and Ladyville, and an Operational Manual and Training Manual for Day Care Providers. In Jamaica, following a national survey of Day Care Centres undertaken by the Caribbean Child Development Centre with support from UNICEF, the Day Care Unit of Children's Services has drafted standards for the service which are currently before Parliament.

7. Developing planning capacity in ECED

In Trinidad and Tobago, the Research, Planning and Implementation Division of the Ministry of Social Development has played a critical role in respect of policy formulation. This Division is trying to develop a focused and **integrated approach to addressing children's issues**, and trying to ensure that programmes promoting children's rights are incorporated into national development strategies as integral components. However, one of the constraints is the **limitations in respect of continuous statistical and other data** to inform policy formulation and the lack of financial and human resources allocated specifically for this purpose. In Trinidad and Tobago and in Belize, **Family Services Divisions** have been established to strengthen the government's capabilities to make integrated interventions and to avoid duplication or collision of efforts across Ministries.

MAIN CONSIDERATIONS in taking forward legislation and planning in ECED

1. Legislation is expensive: consider a regional approach

In the Draft plan of action, legislation for children from birth to school entry is proposed as a priority goal which enshrines their rights, and identifies clearly the responsibilities of the parent and the State in ensuring these rights. Some countries have tried to precede legislation, or to avoid its cost, by creating national policy for children. The limitations in this approach come at implementation stage when policy lacks the authority of law. In an area where so many different statutory and non-statutory bodies are involved in service provision, it is very difficult to ensure cooperation and convergence of efforts to serve the interests of the whole child, without the momentum and focused activity that legislation brings. However legislation is expensive, requiring considerable commitments in human resource and consultative time in preparation. Caribbean countries should consider working together on the development of a regional model that can be appropriately adjusted at consultation stage in each individual country. If legislation incorporates the recommendations in the regional plan, the main thrust will be to enable structures and partnerships to emerge within a regulatory framework, forging links and establishing the basis on which funding can be sought to first meet priority needs, and secondly to plan a process over time for the eventual universalisation of ECED services.

2. Make legislative links with other laws affecting young children

A country's capacity to provide pre-school education is generally enabled by provisions within Education Acts which allow for the extension of schooling to the years before formal school entry on a non-statutory basis. Where these provisions apply, a country can to the best of their financial and human capacity provide pre-school education in nursery schools, basic schools or other free standing pre school centres, or in nursery or kindergarten classes attached formally to primary schools. New legislation should not seek to separate this power granted under Education Acts, as it is solely an Education power, and frequently exercised by individual schools in the best interests of providing a community service. However new legislation should envision ECED arrangements from birth to school entry which integrate all the elements of whole child development, shape the changes required in existing provision to become integrated and empower new community provision which can operate alongside. In this model, the new legislation

will recognise the current diversity in services, and provide the regulatory framework for ensuring progress towards integrated education and development approaches to be used throughout in the best interest of individual children.

3. Make links with other laws affecting the social and economic climate

Consideration will need to be given in most Caribbean countries to amendments to those laws and regulatory provisions which affect the capacity of parents to parent effectively. What flexibility does employment legislation allow for employees to breastfeed at least until a baby's sixth month? Paid maternity leave is one option, flexible working arrangements is another. What provisions exist for partner support of child care? Are there flexible employment arrangements for parental leave during the pre-school years for child illness and clinic attendance? These questions go beyond the immediate concerns of employment and productivity, to the rights and best interests of children, to the status of women in a society and to the social climate being recreated to enable men to participate as nurturing parents.

4. Develop planning capacity for very young children

The PROFILES Project in Jamaica serves as an interesting model for countries in the Region for developing planning instruments and institutionalising a system of data collection, analysis, and use in planning for young children. The Project which has completed its pilot stage is about to be funded by the IDB over the next three years until it is fully incorporated into the process of Jamaica's planning for children.

The idea behind the PROFILES Project is that at about the age of 6, at the time a child enters primary school, it would be useful to collect data both as representative of the actual collective status of children's development at this important point of change in their lives, and as a baseline for looking at what happens to them in school. Since we recognise that the causes for potential difficulty in school largely reside in environmental deficiencies rather than deficits existing within the child, the Project would serve equally to develop pictures of the learning environments in which children find themselves. Thus children's development status can be understood in relation to and in interaction with their contexts for learning.

In collecting data on the child's development at home from the parent, in a pre-primary setting from the teacher/caregiver, from the health centre from the nurse, and in the primary school from the teacher, and also data on the learning environments of the home, the pre-primary setting and the primary school, the PROFILES Project aims to achieve five main purposes for planning for young children:

- to enable a multi disciplinary approach to the planning of interventions
- to provide national pictures to lead, focus and evaluate policy
- to identify groups of children with specific needs
- to support appropriate curriculum development and tools
- to compare children's development, over time, in the specific context of Jamaica.

The emergent data profiles will offer the potential for a longitudinal look at the effects of pre-primary provision, pre-primary to primary transition and primary schooling in Jamaica. It also makes a dynamic link between the pictures emerging from data usually collected shortly after birth on health and nutrition status, then from the anthropometric data collected on school entry and, later still, from the data collected on achievement, repetition and drop out rates in primary schooling and beyond. The PROFILES will begin to inform us as to the processes at work in a period of critical and rapid development for children and will indicate causal and underlying factors in child development and developmental outcomes.

One of the most useful lessons from the PROFILES Project so far has been in the combined used of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Despite the complexities involved in human communication and the labour intensive methods of data collection from individual parents and teachers on a sample basis, the pictures which emerge give a richer basis on which to make interpretations and informed judgments in planning. One of the recommendations of the Draft Plan of Action (Section 2) is for countries to ensure that they develop the capacity to plan, by identifying what they need to know and how they can be sure that their sources and methods are accurate in obtaining information. This is particularly important for all countries who are both economically constrained and struggling to alleviate if not eradicate poverty, for whom the questions as to who to target and where to target are paramount.

5. Plan social and economic supports for ECED interventions

In all Caribbean countries, the urgency to address high levels of poverty has produced commitments and plans of action. In communities that are the most starkly affected by poverty, it has proved almost impossible to construct sustainable solutions for the development of young children through the process of creating single-focus ECED interventions. The Day Care Innovations in the 1970s and the gains in pre-school coverage during the same period prior to structural adjustment could not be sustained as centrally funded service provisions once economies were re-tooled. For most countries in the Region, the 80s decimated most existing ECED provisions and plans for expansion

As a result of these experiences, ECED Interventions in these contexts of poverty cannot be seen ever again as interventions separate from strategies to create employment and training

opportunities, to ensure safe water access and durable shelter, to build social institutions and common purposes which can resist social disintegration and violence, and to develop social attitudes and values in relation to parenting and nurturing practices amongst women and men.

In communities where political or social tensions make it difficult to mobilise people for activities that will be to their benefit, children can provide a rallying point for actions which promote consensus and organisation for the common good. Both direct actions in support of ECED or indirect actions in support of community improvements in health, sanitation, nutrition and social organisation that benefit children are also likely to benefit parents, families and the wider community.[15]

The Draft Plan of Action (section 2) suggests important strategies and actions not only to build planning capacity, but also to select priority areas in which to make interventions, interventions which seek to forge collaborative alliances and serve as models to inform national programmes of interventions. **The phasing of activities** suggested allows for countries to make an immediate start on a small scale in selected communities, an **important indication of intention and commitment** to 'get things right', whilst simultaneously developing data systems and poverty 'maps' to inform the delivery of programme interventions over a longer and sustained **period of time.**

Whilst the critical problems arising from poverty and violence have not (as yet) impacted with the same gravity on all Caribbean societies, the experience of those countries where **violence overshadows every aspect of living** in many communities has focused governments on the urgency to act. Recent research in Jamaica[16] in five poor urban areas revealed communities which are dominated by fear and distrust and often lack very basic forms of cooperation or communication. Community institutions were identified as playing a critical role either in maintaining the vicious cycle of poverty and violence or, more positively, in breaking that cycle. The study findings highlighted the need for interventions to build not just human capital but also social capital. Ultimately this is a community, rather than a policing solution.

Community participants identified projects and programmes that bring people together and build social capital as by far the most important concrete solutions to violence: programmes such as community based activities, with **a particular emphasis on youth activities,** and safe centres for counseling to reduce violence and **improve family and interpersonal communication**. Work and training opportunities were an equally important second priority amongst all groups interviewed. The lesson for all countries in the Region who may find this Jamaican picture uncomfortably close to home is **that diverse and focused interventions with community infrastructural supports,** such as those identified in this study, provide the necessary context for sustainable ECED interventions.

SECOND STEPS: what is being provided in the name of ECED?

In this section we look at a number of forms of provision for ECED and the kinds of supportive environments needed to sustain provision. The most critical area of all is the **local culture** in which ECED is provided: what is the reality of the conditions and lifestyles in which children are born and raised? What is the climate of promotion for ECED provision? What stimulates demand for ECED provisions and what is it about ECED provision that is particularly valued? Are there different perceptions of the needs and outcomes for ECED provision, and if so, how do these effect what is provided in the name of ECED?

ECED provision is **not simply a 'good thing'**, something that has been sought for eagerly, and when provided, actually achieves almost naturally the most beneficial outcomes for young developing children. Countries such as Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago have created substantial ECED services for children three years and older, and in the case of Jamaica enrolment now exceeds 80% of that age group in the population. Yet critical questions in a recent evaluation of Jamaican basic school services arose about the quality of the provision and suggested that the vast majority of the service is **not based on developmentally sound principles.**[17] What has happened and what are the implications for the future? If you were to take a hard look at the experiences of young children in ECED provision with which you are familiar, are you sure that you would feel that their experiences were providing them with an opportunity for beneficial development, let alone optimal development?

One of the main recommendations in the Draft Plan of Action (section 3) suggests an important starting point for all of us, whether or not our countries are substantial ECED providers or operating only fledging services. We need a practical, well informed, communicative basis on which to develop services, in which understandings about the real conditions of young children are shared between policy makers and providers. In other countries of the world, **a period of sensitisation of policymakers** has preceded the development of culturally appropriate ECED services and initiatives at community level: one of the ways in which this has been done is to **appoint ECED specialists** in key governmental positions or to designate an NGO or development agency to lead the sensitisation process.

[15]MYERS, R.G., (1995) Early childhood care and development programs in Latin America and the Caribbean. IDB. Washington

[16]MOSER and HOLLAND (1995) Urban poverty and violence in Jamaica. Preliminary findings of a study. World Bank, BDDC and UWI Centre for Population, Communityand Development (later published in full 1996)

[17]McDonald, K. (1996) Evaluation of Basic School Programmes for Ministry of Education, Revitalization Project. Bernard van Leer Foundation. Jamaica

1. Grounding ECED provision in local cultures

Creating a common language on the priorities for ECED is by no means simple and the time needed to do it effectively cannot be underestimated. Time needs to be spent examining the reasons why cultural forms and expectations have arisen in different societies and communities, and what this might mean for **how ECED provision is used.** For example research into how young males are socialised[18] undertaken in Dominica, Guyana and Jamaica, which has recently been followed up in St. Lucia and Grenada indicates a high level of contradiction and confusion in **child rearing practices which differentiate between boys and girls.**

Research shows that traditional patterns of gender distinctions are central to child rearing and are revealed in parents' preferences at birth, the division of domestic chores, the sanctioned leisure activities, the preferred social values/skills, how discipline is practiced, how emotions are exhibited, and how children are prepared for sexuality. These patterns are in place from a child's birth and affect development from that point on. Daughters are protected for as long as possible, and education is seen as an extension of the protection provided in the home, keeping them 'on track' and resisting the onset of early sexual experiences and resulting pregnancy. However sons are encouraged to become independent and acquire skills they will need for economic survival. The high drop out rate from primary schools of boys in the poorest quintiles in Caribbean societies bear testimony to the most important roles that await them beyond the yard and school (where the women are), out on the streets, with the men. The research clearly demonstrates that the underlying causes for these gender distinctions lie in the wider economic and social spheres, **survival needs structure the choices parents make** from the birth of their children, and the many voices of parents in the research echo the feeling of helplessness at the erosion of their authority in the face of the likely outcomes for their children. Thus countries need to have open channels of communication between communities, policy makers and specialist agencies to ensure that ECED initiatives are grounded in the actual realities of young children.

2. Creating a climate of promotion of the value of ECED

How often do we have single issue campaigns that dominate public education for a specific time before dwindling away? Similarly, how many excellent initiatives have been taken on by existing education structures and absorbed as part of the curriculum, and then become 'dead' study topics rather than skills for living and surviving? How can we articulate the importance of ECED at the levels where behaviours are likely to be affected - and especially promote attractive alternatives for young boys and higher outcomes for young girls? What steps can we take to involve the media in responsive and responsible ways to assist ECED promotion, and how can parents help their children understand what they see currently and resist its replication in their own lives? In what settings and at what stages in life are young people most receptive to learning about early childhood before they tumble into parenthood? Questions such as these need to be kept in the forefront of activities undertaken **to raise consciousness about ECED** and then to **sustain a climate of valuing ECED provisions.**

The Jamaican **Child to Child**[19] programme, now integral to the primary curriculum, was designed to improve the child development knowledge and caretaking practices of primary school children, ages 9-12, and through them, the knowledge and practices of parents or guardians. Amongst the skills children learn are how to make toys and how to help younger children play with them so as to encourage their development. The action oriented curriculum includes role play, group discussions, demonstrations, drama and song, as well as toy making. Major benefits to younger siblings, older siblings, parents, guardians and teachers themselves extended beyond the scope of the Programme and into other areas, such as the improved knowledge of health and development that teachers gained and their introduction to new forms of teaching. However it has proved **difficult to sustain the vitality and basis in community action** of the approach as the Programme has gone to scale. In the process, parts of the pilot were rewritten and topics were dispersed throughout the regular curriculum so that the programme no longer retains its specific identify. Moreover, the "Active learning" part of the curriculum has been weakened, as has the initial training of the teachers in this methodology and the specific content of the Child to Child programme. However, not only does this programme have beneficial developmental potential, it also provides a model of practice, which is easily replicable and can 'go to scale; however, the experience of the Child to Child programme is also that it is difficult to sustain the most important elements of the programme - its activity based learning methodologies and its specific focus in seeking to assist younger siblings and their families.

MAIN CONSIDERATIONS in taking forward provision for ECED

1. Support and raise consciousness about ECED in parents of newborn children

Having reviewed provisions for ECED and the value placed on them in our societies, countries are asked in the Draft Plan of Action (section 5) to devise strategies for support to parents

[18]BROWN, J et al (1995) and (1997) Gender Socialisation Project Reports. Caribbean Child Development Centre, University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica

[19]WRIGHT and GRANTHAM-McGREGOR (1985) Using Primary School Children to Improve Child Rearing Practices in Rural Jamaica. Child: Care, Health and Development, No. 11, pp95-113

and children in the year after a child's birth. One suggestion is to **campaign on the value of extending mother child interaction** in the first few months of life and on the **nutritional and other benefits of breastfeeding to the young child;** this is set of course in the context of providing the primarily economic support structures parents need to devote the time required. Parents cannot be expected to value breastfeeding their babies over and above the necessity for mothers to earn the family income. This is **a critical area for the construction of social partnerships** in support of flexible arrangements for parents, the implementation cost of which (either as payments or as temporary loss of productivity) should be shared between employer and State.

2. Start ECED interventions in the first year of life for maximum benefit to the child

Programmes which integrate home visiting, child development support and parent education interventions in areas of extreme poverty have been successful in the Caribbean and elsewhere in the world (notably Turkey) **if they have sustained high quality in each area of intervention.** The evaluation of the programme in Turkey demonstrated that the impact of the improved parenting skills was still measurably strong when the subjects were found ten years later - measures such as higher participation of the father in family life, higher grade achievement and better school performance of the students.[20] The implications for developing strategies are that each part of the programme needs to be in place, **the approach needs to be integrated** and the supports offered must be of high quality. Programmes which have not taken such an integrated approach cannot generate sustained benefits to parents for future children, or to children for future development.

What is important is the dynamic between the programme elements. Many community health services in the Region developed home visiting and parent education programmes in the 1970s. Many of these have suffered from the same decimating forces as Day Care in the 1980s. However, models developed subsequently elsewhere in the world have proved to be more sustainable in a combined use of trained professionals, para professionals and parents working at community level. Critically **the cost benefit is greatest when the supporting environment has been addressed**: the initiatives to alleviate poverty, to provide training and employment opportunities, to build social organisations and to promote a climate of valuing ECED supports mentioned in the sections above.

As you will see from an accompanying paper to this conference, Why do children of the Caribbean need programmes of Early Childhood Education and Development?, there are **very strong scientific, human rights, social, moral, economic, programme efficacy, social equity and political arguments** for starting ECED programme interventions in the first year of a child's life. There are arguments which are just as strong for **ensuring that parents have the knowledge** and the skills to use, organise and benefit from such programmes. For parents, access to the knowledge they require at this stage, and the understanding of their role as primary facilitators and intermediaries in the education of their children will serve to strengthen their parenting in future years. **One if the most misleading impressions parents can be given is that education is primarily the function of the school**, and is a fundamentally mysterious process that only teachers properly understand. It is amazing how pervasive this view of the teacher is in the Caribbean today, given the rates of underachievement and drop out, and how reflective this view is of **parents' own lack of confidence in themselves as educators** rather than any realistic view of what miracles a teacher can perform in (apparent) isolation from the profoundly influential impact on the child of family, community and the wider society.

3. Sustain ECED supports to the child and family in the years before preschool

The Draft plan of action suggests specific strategies and action to build on the ECED interventions in a child's first year of life, and specifically addresses the need for early childhood/ childcare centres offering high quality and accessible services to parents, particularly those who need the support in order to work. However, it is clear from experience across developing and developed countries that high quality formal programmes of this nature are expensive (in staff/child ratios particularly) and are not always used to capacity if not established to meet family needs for accessible hours of operation and affordability, and to meet cultural expectations of learning outcomes (especially as regards preparation for formal schooling).

Day Care provision as we generally recognise it in this Region is understaffed by any standard of minimal quality provision in the developed world. However, it is a presumption to begin a debate about quality in our provisions without first addressing the seriousness of the lack of human resources, trained and apprentice, paid and volunteer. Our staff/child ratios would be considered dangerous in inner city London or New York and the provision deregistered if not immediately improved.

In too many of our settings, d**ay care providers first and foremost are helping parents survive; a second priority is to assist children to develop.** How many parents privately pray just that their children will be kept safely (and fed) until they return? In times of little choice within a price range and limited opening times, how many parents expect anything more of a developmental nature? How vital it is to offer parents support and sufficient knowledge to complement the deficits in the present day care provisions that their children attend!

Home based day care provides a cheaper, informal service to parents, with considerable benefits in higher ratios and greater communication between parents and providers. In some developed countries, the systems for support, licensing, training and standardising home based day care providers for

[20] KAGITCIBASI, BEKMAN and GOSKEL (1195) Amulti purpose model of non formal education in Coordinators Notebook # 18. The Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, New York

the needs of children before pre-school age has been given higher priority over the development of day care services because of the greater potential for affordable and accessible arrangements, closer interaction between parent and provider, provider and child, smaller family and community context and closer cultural links. However the **combination of investments in support, regulation and training is vital** to achieve a minimal level of quality in home based care, and providers themselves generally see the investment as one with limited personal returns beyond a few years of operating. Home based day carers benefit from the support and training received and often move on to other areas of social welfare work, a process which creates a structural need to live with high turnover and to build budget capacity to address it.

What is clear for all children in poverty, and particularly for those whose parents are working, is that the services which are used to care for them need to provide both their educational and developmental needs. It is for us to consider if we are able to do this better formally or informally, in centres or in home based care, in a number of different ways according to local variations or through a standard model or policy arrangement. What we also have to consider is how we support, train, monitor and regulate providers, and how we identify indicators of minimal quality below which provision will not be licensed. For those of you who have looked at the exercise on Defining High Quality Provision written for this conference, you will see that any provision that cannot meet a minimal level of quality will discourage if not arrest a child's development, and in that scenario, we have to be able to ask ourselves why we are continuing to allow it to be provided any longer.

4. Prioritise quality improvements in pre-school services

There are many contributions being made at this conference addressing experiences in pre-school settings, and the supports both within and surrounding pre-school services which constrain or enable them to develop quality. One of the greatest constraining factors is the same as that found in day care services: the **sheer scale of the human resource needs in the service** from specialised training, to ongoing supervision and direction, to ensuring the appropriate age related staff child ratios in order to function in the interests of child development, again to a minimal level. How many teachers in Caribbean preschool settings are able to answer a unreserved "YES" to the two questions devised by Lilian Katz and included in the note on defining quality:

"Are working conditions adequate to encourage me to enhance my knowledge, skills and career commitment?" "Am I usually treated with respect and understanding?"

The strategies for supporting quality improvements of necessity **rely on social partnerships** which are caught up in a classic "Catch 22" situation:

- **Training** of staff needs clarity of competencies and accreditation procedures to meet service standards, and needs positive **staff child ratios** in order to put training to good effect;
- **Staff child ratios** rely on resource commitments from **funding providers** such as parent's fees, government subsidies, income generation activities and sponsorship from the private sector;
- **funding providers** rely on **returns** for their money in terms of human productivity (higher levels of education in the workforce of the future, greater reliability of parents in the workforce today); reduction in health costs because a preventive measure is in place; reduction of inefficiency in the school system by reducing repetition, drop out and remedial programmes; social stability (reduction of costs related to social welfare and crime); and resulting savings which can be reinvested.
- **returns** on the investment in pre-school services rely on the sustainability of **well managed, quality** provision;
- **well managed quality** provision relies on the reinvestment of returns in order that teachers can be trained and will in turn.....

It is within this context that individual countries **need to analyse their coverage** of the preschool population, in the one to two years leading up to primary school entrance. In setting goals for coverage (three and four year olds living in poverty; full time access for all children in need by the year 2000 etc.) it is critical for child development and sustainability of the ECED service offered that **countries do not lose sight of the quality equation**. The lessons of preschool evaluations in Trinidad and Tobago (described later today) and in Jamaica suggest that it is best not to start ECED provision until local models have been developed and evaluated, and until the **process of 'going to scale' can be managed effectively** to ensure the full development potential of the service being offered to children.

The Draft Plan of Action (section 7) offers key goals and strategies for addressing the need to promote children's learning and development in preschool settings. Every element is important in **securing the development of children**:

- pedagogical guidelines for staff based on a validated curriculum,
- partnership with parents to ensure common

understandings and purposes in the defining and delivery of quality services,
- training towards competencies and accreditation for staff,
- lay inspection and advisory services to ensure community feedback to providers and government,
- development of physical plant resources to maximise variety in learning experiences for whole child development, and
- ensuring staff child ratios promote development rather than being the main obstacle in its way.

At the heart of a successful curriculum for children are the **complementary approaches of child centred learning and the forging of communicative partnerships with parents**. We cannot get it right in preschool settings if these two goals are not constantly guiding practice. In each preschool setting these goals need to be defined, their meanings for strategies developed, and implementing activities articulated and shared between parents and staff. Strategies for keeping these goals in the forefront of the development of services are also essential. We must ask ourselves:

- How successful in terms of developmental outcomes for children is the service's implementations of child centred methodologies?
- How far have we integrated psycho-social aspects into the curriculum?
- How informed and 'connected' are individual parents, despite their limited availability because of work, and the multiple hardships in their lives?
- Are we in fact insisting that they come and participate? And are we facilitating that participation?
- How sure can we be that we have found effective ways of reporting back to parents and involving them in joint planning with us for the development of their child?
- Are we sure that our service ensures development of children at least to a minimum level, and is progressing to a higher level framed by the realistic goals for our context and our times?
- **If not, why are we doing it this way at all?**

THIRD STEPS: how is ECED being supported and sustained?

1. Taking an integrated approach to ECED

You will hear discussion at this conference about the ways in which services and supports need to be integrated in order to ensure the child's integrated development. Integration is the process which maximises the potential for social partnerships in support of ECED development at the national level, underlies the framework for public and parent education initiatives and reflects most accurately the rhythms of how very young children learn and develop. Development of the very young child does not proceed smoothly through subjects or areas or stages; it works on all planes at once. Children are at all times vulnerable to the absence of climates of safety, security, affection and acceptance, and responsive to positive interactions with adults and children in environments which allow them choices and structured learning. The Draft Plan of Action identifies **integration goals** at the levels of the **family** of the young child, of the **local services** provided in ECED, and of the **management at national level** of the processes of capacity building, streamlining of government functions, investment (in service quality, expansion and planning) and **transition to primary school.**

A critical issue is how the integration 'tone' is set. As you will see in other papers at the conference, integration is not a state or end point; rather it is a continuing and dynamic process in working arrangements. At the level of service management, it has been interpreted in a range of developing countries to mean **cooperation** between governments and agencies, **coordination** of service and supports at local level, and/or **convergence** of responsibilities under single management. As the Draft Plan of Action summarises, practical experience has demonstrated **the power and effectiveness of integration within a single Ministry** (with responsibility for all ECED services) where there is **designated (and additional) capacity** and **strong political support**. In the absence of these elements, cooperation has proved to be slower but less challenging to the existing order if that is a priority consideration. What is significant in the experiences cited by Bob Myers[21] is that whatever approach taken at national level, it is important for effective integration at community level that all the elements (preventive health care, ECED provision, structural, social and economic supports) are combined with a **devolution of decision making power to generate community participation** and ownership.

2. Designating budgets and planning investments for ECED

Country representatives attending the Belize Conference were provided with a clear analysis of the relationship between the development of their national budgets and their capacity for providing for their obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF CAO, 1996: Annex 7). The very **grave situation in which families of young children** find themselves sharpens the urgency for ECED supports: in much of the English speaking Caribbean, **one in three children is living in poverty**. Although traditionally child rearing has been a role ascribed to one gender in the home context, increasingly it is women who head 30-40% of the region's households and whose participation in the labour force steadily increases. Where women are not able to get employment, their ability to maintain their means of existence and that of their children is imperiled.

[21] MYERS, R.G., (1996) Early childhood care and development programs in Latin America and the Caribbean. IDB, Washington

The circle in which poor children find themselves is a vicious one. Children from poor families often fall quickly and progressively behind their more advantaged peers in their readiness for school and life, and that gap is never closed. In fact, there is strong evidence throughout the region that **budget planning has tended to foster this increasing divide between the rich and the poor** by targeting greater resource allocations in the tertiary and secondary sectors, and within those sectors, in the more academic and in the privately run institutions (where there is an almost total absence of young males and a tiny minority of females from the poorest fifth of the society). Governments have been urged to commit to the 20:20 principle whereby Basic Social Services (for human development) are jointly funded on a basis of a minimum designation of 20% of government budget and 20% of development assistance from donor countries. **Governments need to keep adequate expenditure records** to allow for the kind of budget analysis that illuminates the basis on which the 20:20 compact can work. Without a **rigorous budget review process**, and **complementary effective targeting of resources,** governments will not be able to plan equitable distribution of resources to ensure **equality of access to ECED supports for those who need them most**.

In the Draft Plan of Action, and in the accompanying paper on the rationale for ECED programmes, **the basis for investment in ECED supports and services is shown to be in the future pay off.** The pay off has been estimated to be three to four fold in the developing world, and as much as seven-fold amongst poor populations in the developed world. In the Highscope/ Perry Preschool longitudinal study in the USA, the test group and control groups (from disadvantaged black preschools) were interviewed at 27 years old. With corroborating independent data the study revealed that the experimental group had 1/5 to 1/ 3 the arrests of the control group, received less welfare assistance in their adult lives, had higher school achievement and literacy scores, had 1/3 more numbers graduate from high school, made more long-lasting marriages, had fewer out of wedlock births and displayed greater social responsibilities. Not only does the child experience long term benefits; **ECED programmes enable immediate economic benefits** in increasing labour force participation by women, and freeing older siblings to go to school or to get a job.

Governments need to review their ECED budget allocations, streamline budgets so as to eliminate duplication and waste (this is one of the stronger arguments for integration at national level) and establish an equitable basis on which to fund existing provisions and to attract new funds for improving and expanding coverage as targeted. In the conference tomorrow a paper will be presented that develops this process further.

3. Monitoring, evaluating and training for quality in ECED

Throughout this paper the **systems needs** for monitoring, evaluation and training have been emphasised as **integral to the processes** recommended--legislation, planning, targeting the poor, public and parenting education, ECED provisions and supports, integration approaches and budget allocations. Governments need to establish embryonic monitoring systems where none currently exist, or refocus those that do but which do not lend themselves to disaggregation of ECED statistics. These then must by underpinned with baseline recording procedures at the level of provider and community, and **'think tank' capacity** for ongoing research and evaluation at policy level. This is an area where a regional approach would reduce in-country expenditure on system design and would serve to attract regional donor funding for priorities arising from the production of data on both country and regional trends.

Training occupies the considerations of a number of papers and workshop contributions at this conference, and this contribution serves mainly to emphasise the need for **an overarching and coherent system** of training, which incorporates development of validated curricula, competency and accreditation procedures, in-service and pre-service models using workplace and distance learning techniques, and which identifies accessible progression routes between each level. Such a system would benefit from being established **at a regional level** to standardise and streamline the expense of accreditation and qualification procedures, and also supported at the national level in the provision of diverse curricula to meet local conditions and cultural expectations. One of the strategies suggested in the Draft Plan of Action is for the construction of **a training route that connects** the first base community parent education training with ECED competency training, followed by access into teacher and ECED leadership training. In an equitable system, each participating 'carer' or 'educator' of young children should be able to opt for training and knowledge acquisition which can access him or her **to the highest levels of ECED training outcomes** if so desired and enabled.

In conclusion: the main considerations for sustaining support to ECED

This paper is a **contribution to work in progress** in the region, work that will be complemented by the compilation of country 'pictures' giving both quantitative and qualitative assessments of the state of ECED supports and provisions in your countries, and progressed by the recommendations which will flow from this conference and which will form the basis of both regional level cooperation and country level planning in the Draft Plan of Action. In each area that we have identified there is a need to identify or create the means whereby ECED ceases to be a marginal and optional endeavour of a few in a society, and becomes part of the normal lifeblood and cultural expectations of families and communities in every country in the region. As the participant at the Belize conference reminds us, **the care and protection of children is everybody's business**; in this region we think that we can create a balanced strategy of regional cooperation and national activity, which will both harness necessary supports and empower local capacities to take forward ECED initiatives in the interests of the rights of each child from birth.

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LIST OF CONFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Appendix V

SOME OF THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS CAN BE ACCESSED FROM UNICEF CARIBBEAN AREA OFFICE HOMEPAGE: HTTP://WWW.CARIBSURF.COM/UNICEF

1. Caribbean Plan of Action for Early Childhood Education, Care and Development, 1997-2002
2. Situation Analysis of Early Childhood Care and Development in the Caribbean by Caribbean Child Development Centre, University of the West Indies, Jamaica
3. Early Childhood: An Assessment of the Situation in the English-Speaking Caribbean and Suriname by Kerida McDonald
4. Improving Quality Education in Early Childhood Development - Curriculum Development: Processes and Products for Empowerment by Dr Megan Goodridge
5. A Case for Strengthening Government Investment in ECD by Mr Fabio Sabatini
6. Parent Volunteer Support Programme: Home, School and Community Partnership in Early Childhood Education in Barbados by Dr Megan Goodridge
7. The Project Approach: A Second Practical Guide for Teachers by Sylvia C. Chard
8. Young Children's Social Development: A checklist by Ms Diane E. McClellan and Dr Lilian Katz
9. Staff Development for School Improvement by Ms Barbara A.E. Parris
10. Profile of Community Outreach ECED Interventions by Dr Kerida McDonald, Janet Brown, Sonia Ebanks, Lilian Ferrier
11. Mathematical Experiences at Home and School: The Importance of Home-School Communication in THE Early Years by Marguerite C. Gustave
12. Creative Dance and Movement in THE Early Childhood Education Programme by Donna E. Hunte-Cox
13. I've Got THE Music in Me by June Graham
14. Early Identification of Possible Developmental Delays by
15. The Gifted and Talented Definitions by Edward L. Meyers
16. Setting The Pace for Life Long Learning by Cassie Landers
17. Quality Infant/Toddler Programmes by Sharon Marriott
18. On The Way to Better Educational Opportunities in Primary Education in Suriname by Dr. Cynthia Ringeling
19. Teaching Students Cooperative Skills
20. All about Animals by M. Blanchette
21. Whole Classroom Readiness and Activities (Teacher Created Materials, Inc.)
22. An Anthology of Speech Training Rhymes
23. The Assessment of Literacy Outcomes in Early Childhood Education by Dr. Desmond Clarke
24. The Status of ECCE Provision in Trinidad and Tobago by Carol Logie
25. Assisting Young Children in THE Development of Oral Language Skills by Catherine Blackman
26. The Supporting Environment for The Delivery of ECE by Rose Davies
27. Assessing the Development of Pre-Schoolers by Lilian G. Katz

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Appendix VII

SECOND CARIBBEAN CONFERENCE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT
1-5 April 1997
Barbados
PROGRAMME
OPENING CEREMONY

Tuesday 1 April 1997

Master of Ceremonies:	Mrs. Esme Bascombe, Secretary, Early Childhood Education Association of Barbados, (ECEAB)
08:30 a.m.	**Musical Interlude** Wesley Hall School Symphonia
09:00 a.m.	**National Anthem of Barbados** Wesley Hall School Symphonia
09:05 a.m.	**Introductory Statement and Acknowledgement of Delegates** Ms. Shelley Ashby, President, ECEAB
09:20 a.m.	**Welcome Address and Declaration of Opening of Conference** Hon. Mia Amor Mottley, Minister of Education, Youth Affairs & Culture
09:35 a.m.	**Remarks** Mr. Macharia Kamau, Area Representative UNICEF Caribbean Area Office (UNICEF/CAO)
09:*45 a.m.*	**Remarks** Mrs. Colleen Winter-Brathwaite, Representative United Nations Educational, Scientfic and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)
09:*55 a.m.*	**Remarks** Mr. Herman Grant, Chief Development Officer, Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)
	Remarks Her Excellency, Mrs. Colleen Swords, High Commissioner Canadian High Commission
	Keynote Address Dr. Lilian Katz, Professor of Early Childhood Education University of Illinois, USA

Reception immediately follows. Delegates should re-assemble at 12:45 for the Opening Session of the Conference.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT
1-5 April 1997
Barbados

AGENDA

Tuesday, April 1, 1997

Ceremonies Coordinator:	Mrs. Margreta Clarke, Vice President, Early Childhood Association of Barbados (ECEAB)
13:00 - 13:05	**Election of Conference Chairperson** Chairperson: Representative of US Virgin Islands, Convenor of 1st Caribbean Conference on Early Childhood Education
13:05 -13:30	**Aims and Objectives of Conference** Presenter: Conference Chairperson-Elect
SESSION I	*Chairperson:* Mrs. Wendy Griffith-Watson, Chief Education Officer (ag), Ministry of Education, Barbados
13:30 - 13:45	**UNICEF Policy on Early Childhood Education** Presenter: Ms. Cassie Landers, Early Childhood Development Consultant, UNICEF, New York Headquarters
13:45 - 15:00	**Early Childhood Education: An Assessment of the Situation in the English-speaking Caribbean and Suriname**. Presenters: Mrs. Janet Brown, Director, Caribbean Child Development Centre, Jamaica Dr. Kerida McDonald, Consultant, Caribbean Child Development Centre, Jamaica Dr. Carol Logie, Lecturer, Early Childhood Education, University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago
15:00 - 15:30	**Coffee Break**
	Chairperson: Mr. Elroy Turnbull,Chief Education Officer Ministry of Education, British Virgin Islands
15:30 -16:30	**Open Discussion**
16:30	**Meeting of Steering Committee** **Meeting of Working Committee on Draft Plan of Action** **Meeting of Organising Committee for Structuring the Caribbean Association**

Wednesday, April 2, 1997
SESSION II

Chairperson:	Mr. Macaulay Peters, Chief Education Officer Ministry of Education, St. Vincent and the Grenadines
08:30 - 10:30	Panel Discussion on Improving Quality Education in Early Childhood Development
08:30-09:10	**The Supporting Environment for the Delivery of ECE** Presenter: Mrs. Rose Davies, Lecturer, Faculty of Education, UWI Mona Campus, Jamaica
	Curriculum Development: Processes and Products for Empowerment Presenter: Dr. Megan Goodridge, Special Projects Officer, Ministry of Education, Barbados
09:10 - 09:30	**Open Discussion**
09:30-10:10	**Integrated Approaches to Early Childhood Care and Development Programmes** Presenter: Dr. Kerida McDonald, Consultant, Caribbean Child Development Centre, Jamaica
	A Case for Strengthening Government Investment in ECD Presenter:Mr.Fabio Sabatini, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, UNICEF Caribbean Area Office (UNICEF/CAO)
10:10 - 10:30	**Open Discussion**
10:30 - 11:00	**Coffee Break**

SESSION III

11:00 - 12:00	**Donor Panel: Response to the Regional Plan of Action for Early Childhood Care and Education** Moderator:Mr. Juan Carlos Espinola, Programme Coordinator, UNICEF Caribbean Area Office
12:00 - 12:30	**Open Discussion**
12:30 - 12:45	**Press Briefing**
12:30 - 14:00	**Lunch**

SESSION IV - Concurrent Workshops

Participants should sign up for the Workshops of their preference on the sheets provided. Please note that there are restrictions in the number of persons who may attend all Workshops. Therefore, subscriptions will be on a first come, first served basis and participants are urged to strictly adhere to these restrictions.

A continuous coffee service will be available throughout the afternoon sessions.

TIME	DOVER ROOM	HALL A	HALL B	HALL C
14:00 - 15:00	*Maximising the Benefits of Children's Literature in an Early Childhood Classroom* Mrs. Margaret Blanchette, Specialist in Children's Literature, Barbados	*Assessment of Early Childhood Literacy* Dr. Desmond Clarke, Lecturer, UWI, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados	*The Teacher's Role in Children's Social Development* Dr Lilian Katz, Professor of Early Childhood Education, University of Illinois, USA	*Cooperative Learning Strategies for the Very Young* Mrs. Patricia Saul, Senior Teacher, Belmont Primary, Barbados
15:00 - 16:00	*Mathematical Experiences at Home and School: The Importance of Home School Communications in the Early Years* Mrs. Marguerite Gustave, Curriculum Officer, Preschool Services, Ministry of Education, St. Lucia	*Aspects of Quality Care in Infant/ Toddler Programmes* Ms. Sharon Marriott, Coordinator, National Plan of Action for Children, Ministry of Social Development, Trinidad and Tobago	*Parenting Education* Mrs. Janet Brown, Director, Caribbean Child Development Centre, Jamaica	*Schools and Communities in Partnership* Mrs. Maureen Lucas, Principal, Erdiston Teachers' Training College, Barbados
16:00 - 17:00	*Early Childhood Care and Education Curriculum in Trinidad and Tobago: Implications for Programme Enhancement in the Caribbean:* Dr. Carol Logie, Lecturer, ECD, UWI, Trinidad and Tobago	*The Early Childhood Educator and the Prevention of Maltreatment of Young Children* Ms. Joan Crawford, Snr. Child Care Officer, Barbados Child Care Board	*Assisting Young Children in the Development of Oral Language Skills* Mrs. Catherine Blackman, Education Officer, Early Childhood Education, Ministry of Education, Barbados	*Perspectives in Quality of Early Childhood Education:* Dr. Lilian Katz, Professor of Early Childhood Education, University of Illnois, USA
17:00 - 18:00	Exchange of country experiences	Exchange of country experiences	Exchange of country experiences	Exchange of country experiences

Thursday, April 3, 1997

SESSION V - Concurrent Workshops

Participants should sign up for the Workshops of their preference on the sheets provided. Please note that there are restrictions in the number of persons who may attend all Workshops. Therefore, subscriptions will be on a first come, first served basis and participants are urged to strictly adhere to these restrictions. A continuous coffee service will be available throughout the afternoon sessions.

TIME	DOVER ROOM	HALL A	HALL B	HALL C
08:30 - 09:30	*Movement Experiences in the ECE Programme* Mrs. Donna Hunte-Cox, Teacher/ Performing Arts, Barbados	*Puppetry in Education:* Ms. Arlette St. Hill, Audio-Visual Aids Officer, Ministry of Education, Barbados	*Working with Parents of Children with Special Needs:* Dr. Garry Hornby, Consultant, Erdiston Teachers Training College, Barbados	*Science with Young Children: The Living Classroom* Mrs. Roseanne Myers, General Manager and Co-presenter, Atlantis Submarine
09:30 - 10:30	*Drama for Young Children* Mrs. Janice Thompson, Principal, St. Martin-Mangrove Primary School, Barbados	*Building Skills for Life in Early Childhood* Programmes Mrs. Annette Wiltshire, Health and Family Life Education Specialist, Trinidad	*Community-based model of preschool education: The St. Lucian Experience* Mrs. Rosamunde Renard, Coordinator, Laborie Community Education Centre, St. Lucia	
10:30 - 11:00	**COFFEE BREAK**			
11:00 - 12:30	*"I've Got the Music in Me - Activities for 3-8 year olds":* Mrs. June Graham, Teacher, Erdiston Nursery School, Barbados & Mrs. Selma Wilkinson, Teacher, St. Luke's Primary, Barbados	*Creative Art Experiences in the Development of Young Children:* Ms. Beverley Alleyne, Teacher, Ministry of Education, Barbados	*Parent Support Volunteer Programme:* Dr. Megan Goodridge, Special Projects Officer, Ministry of Education, Barbados	*Teacher Education: Staff Development* Mrs.Barbara Parris, Deputy Principal, Erdiston Teachers Training College, Barbados
12:30 - 13:00	**Press Briefing**			
12:30 - 14:00	**LUNCH**			

TIME	DOVER ROOM	HALL A	HALL B	HALL C
14:00 - 15:00	*Young Minds Exploring and Developing through Technological Pursuits:* Mrs. Gemiel Hinkson, Teacher, St. Matthias Primary/ Mrs. Etwin Trotman & Mr. David Waterman, Audio-Visual Aids Officers, Ministry of Education, Barbados	*Strategies for the identification and teaching of gifted children in the early years:* Mr. Bert Thompson, Tutor Erdiston College, Barbados	*Parent Education Session:* Mr. Selwyn Brooks, President, National Council of Parent-Teacher Associations, Barbados	*Audio-Visual Aids Practical:* Mr. Lemuel Jordan, Audio-Visual Aids Officer, Ministry of Education, Barbados
15:00 - 16:00	*Developing a Technology Literate Workforce: Tools for Starting Them Early* Mr. Ivan W.Baugh Mrs. Jean G. Baugh	*The Early Childhood Educator and the Special Needs Child* Mrs. Beverley Neblett-Lashley, Tutor, Erdiston College	*Parent Education Session:* Child Care Department, Barbados Child Care Board	*Project Approach in ECE Programmes* Dr. Lilian Katz, Professor of Early Childhood Education, University of Illinois & Dr. Sylvia Chard, Lecturer, Early Childhood Education, University of Alberta, Canada
16:00 - 17:00	*Using technology to enhance teaching and learning* Dr. Mary Markowsky, International Consultant, Education Technology, USA	*Community-based model of pre-school education:The Jamaica Experience* Dr. Kerida MacDonald, Consultant, Caribbean Child Development Centre, Jamaica	*The Stages of Parenthood Parent Education Session* Mrs. Marva Springer, Director/ Ms. Rhonda Bryan-Hutson Parent Education for Development in Barbados (PAREDOS)	*Continued*
17:00 - 18:00		*Values Education* Ms. Myrna Belgrave, Principal Garrison Secondary School	*Continued*	*Interpersonal Relationships* Mrs. Anne Hewitt Barbados Shipping & Trading

14:30 - 16:30 **Review of Regional Plan of Action for Early Child Care and Development**
Select Committee of Regional Representatives
Chairperson: Mr. Juan Carlos Espinola, Programme Coordinator, UNICEF CAO

17:30 **Technical Briefing for the Press**

Friday, April 4, 1997

09:00 - 12:00	**Visits to Schools**
14:00 - 18:00	**Optional Tours**
19:30 - 23:00	**Bajan Cultural Evening - Tyrol Cot**

Saturday, April 5, 1997

SESSION V

09:00 - 10:00	**Adoption of Regional Association of Early Childhood Educators** Chairperson: Mr. Keith Browne, President, Jamaica Association of Basic School Boards
10:00 - 11:10	**Plenary Review and Adoption of the Plan of Action for improving the quality, scope and coverage of early childhood programmes in the region.** Chairperson: Mr. Juan Carlos Espinola, Programme Coordinator, UNICEF Caribbean Area Office
11:10 -11:30	**Conference Summary** Presenter: Ms. Shelley Ashby, President, Early Childhood Education Association of Barbados
11:30 - 11:50	**Feature Address** Senator Cynthia Forde, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, Barbados
11:50 - 12:00	**Vote of Thanks** Mrs. Margreta Clarke, Vice President, Early Childhood Education Association of Barbados
12:00	**Press Briefing**

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